

THE BIRTHDAY ISSUE

Liz Earle

MAY/JUNE 23

Wellbeing

60

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Well, hello! Welcome to my birthday issue

When it comes to ageing, we're bold, brave and focusing on the many positives of ageing well. There's just so much to celebrate about life, especially when we look and feel our best. So we're honing in on the many ways to improve our wellbeing. Sleep is vitally important when it comes to ageing well, which is why we've included a helpful, in-depth sleep plan, together with a fascinating article on mouth taping. Something I'm going to try – and not just for snoring...

I'm so encouraged by our feature about fitness in older age – right the way up to 100 years old (and beyond), including a beginner's guide to our VO₂ max. Bodywise, we have a specific spotlight on shoulder pain and leaky gut, both common ailments that can be sorted with the right care, as well as an important update on how to spot the early warning signs of many common cancers.

One of my favourite recent episodes of my *Liz Earle Wellbeing Show* podcast was with Mary Biles, a passionate advocate on the health benefits of CBD. Her article is a must-read if you're intrigued to try. Other wellness-worthy new ideas include MCT oil, one of my own daily dietary additions now, and don't miss our guide to maximising micronutrients, as well as a review of important fat facts, too. I also really enjoyed learning more about microgreens and will get growing on my windowsill, ready for summer salads.

For more food inspiration, there are some brilliant high-protein brunch ideas. I'm loving the lemon, ricotta and poppy seed pancakes, along with the scrambled tofu with almond and watercress pesto, served on a slice of sourdough. Simply sensational! I'm also a fan of fennel, and love our four delicious ways with fennel dishes. Nutritious and delicious.



When it comes to beauty, who knew Botox could be for the hair? And there's an update on skin-smoothing retinoid, as well as ways to get more from our makeup. On the emotional front, there's advice on how to avoid feeling 'blah' and brilliant tips from therapist James Earl on managing anger. Oh, and the gorgeous Tess Daly shares her secrets for a better 'second-half' too.

Fancy a wellbeing break? Why not join me at our first ever exclusive wellness retreat in the heart of Italy. I'm very much looking forward to this, see page 110 for details. In the meantime, I shall celebrate my big day with a glass or two of our elderflower and grapefruit summer spritz cocktail – made with kombucha! I hope you'll join me and raise a glass to ageing well.

Liz Earle MBE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PS! Don't miss our fabulous **FREE** competition to win a fabulous three-night break for two in the Algarve, details on page 128.

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My better
second half
with Tess Daly



Wellbeing **POSTBAG**



Get in touch!

We love hearing directly from the Wellbeing community, so drop us an email at hq@lizearlewellbeing.com to share your feedback with Liz and the team. We always appreciate your comments and look forward to hearing from you.



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@lizearleme



Liz Earle Wellbeing



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WIN!

The best letter or picture this issue will get a By Sarah London Moisture Mask, RRP £44. Just send your letters and pictures to HQ@lizearlewellbeing.com with Postbag in the subject title.



SALAD DAYS

Just recreated this delicious mackerel salad from your March/April issue for brunch. Only had tinned mackerel but worked just as well. Delicious, filling and super healthy! Thank you, Liz and the team for great recipes and articles.

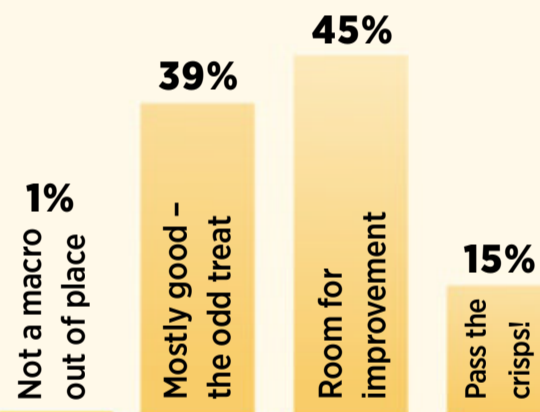
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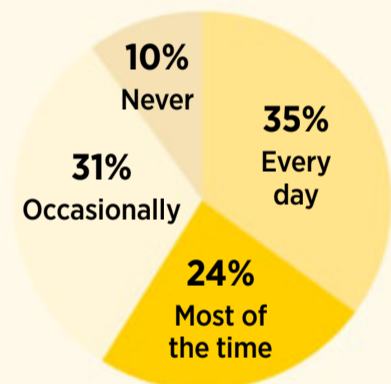
Lights, camera, action

A peep behind the scenes at our fabulous cover shoot for Liz's birthday.

What you think...



How healthy is your diet?

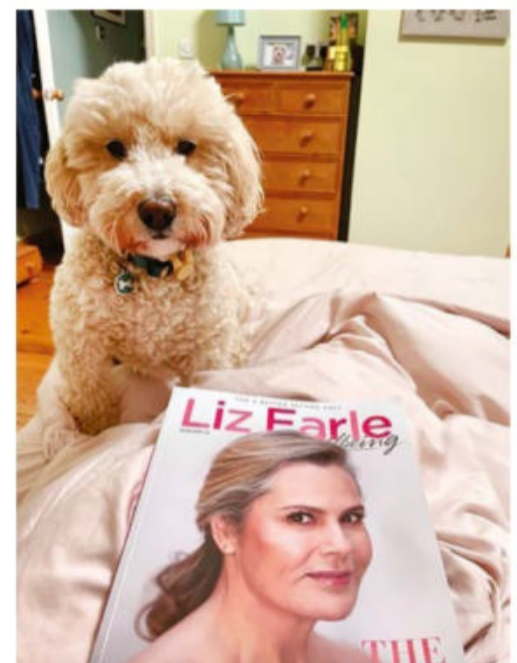


Do you wear makeup?

Midlife inspiration

I've been following you and your podcasts since lockdown. I'm healthier and happier now at 54 than I ever have been, and have learned so much from your sharing of knowledge. You're an inspiration for us midlifers, and my Monday morning treat this week has been a chill in bed with my *Liz Earle Wellbeing* magazine.

Caroline



Find out how to
be a 'kick-ass
100-year-old'
on page 20



AGE *well*

Whether conquering mountains or more modest aspirations, make your second half count.

Wellbeing NEWS

Need-to-know news for a better second half.

LIVE WELL

Prescription to party

● When was the last time you threw a party? Taking time to gather for a chat, dance and laugh is great for wellbeing, says a new study by Indiana University researchers. After surveying thousands of people over several years, they found that celebrating milestones (from securing a new job to moving into a new home) with food, drink and perhaps even a couple of balloons boosts confidence and creates a sense of belonging. These are both associated with increased lifespan, robust mental health, reduced heart rate and blood pressure, better sleep, and other positive health outcomes.



EAT WELL



Take heart

- Pop the kettle on! A study supported by The Heart Foundation has shown that elderly women who drink black tea daily have a reduced risk of heart disease and memory loss. This is thanks to tea's flavonoid content, say researchers. If we're not keen on a cuppa, these longevity-boosting compounds are also found in nuts, berries, red wine and good-quality dark chocolate.

AGE WELL

Walk this way

- A new study found that older adults who took at least 4,500 steps a day had a 77% lower risk of cardiovascular events than those who took fewer than 2,000 steps a day. What's more, they found that every additional 500 steps a day were associated with a 14% lower risk of stroke or heart attack.

AGE WELL

Full of beans

● Why do some wake full of energy, while others crawl out of bed? Our habits might play a role, according to new research from the University of California. The winning formula for wide-awake mornings, they say, is exercising the day before, sleeping longer and later into the morning, and eating a breakfast containing complex carbohydrates. Others, like Liz, find early starts and a protein-only meal works for them.



EAT WELL

Stand tall

● Including more vitamin K in our diet might help to strengthen our bones and prevent fractures, according to a new study published in *Food & Function*. Researchers found that women eating more than 100mcg of vitamin K every day were 31% less likely to have a fracture (particularly a hip fracture) when compared to those eating less than 60mcg. We can hit our 100mcg target by eating one to two servings of foods such as leafy greens, broccoli, lettuce, asparagus, kiwi or Brussels sprouts.

AGE WELL

Night, night!

● The Twinings 2023 Sleep Census has shown that 50% of Brits aren't getting their seven to eight hours sleep, and a further 25% are getting fewer than five hours. Staying up too late watching television was one of the key culprits (19%), as was feeling stressed about money (17%) and work (15%). Sleep expert and co-founder of Sleep School, Dr Guy Meadows shares his top tips for a good night's rest.



1 WIND DOWN

Start by reducing mental and emotional stimulation, and switching off digital devices at least an hour before bed. It helps to sleep in the same place, whenever possible, and avoid drifting off elsewhere before bedtime. As soon as you feel tired, start your bedtime routine to help avoid cat naps. If you repeat a few simple steps each night, your brain will start to associate them with bedtime and help prepare your body for sleep. It could be as simple as having a hot drink, listening to relaxing music or doing some meditative stretches or breathing.

2 KEEP A ROUTINE

Irregular sleep patterns can cause havoc and lead to poor-quality sleep, low energy and social jet lag. Around 12% of us don't keep an eye on the clock, resulting in late bedtimes. Setting a 'go to bed' alarm each day can help to keep sleep on track and keep wake-up times within 30 minutes every day to regulate patterns. For those that socialise at the weekend, aim to wake up no later than one hour past your normal weekday wake time. If you feel tired later in the day, take a 20-minute power nap between midday and 3pm.

3 ADDRESS STRESS

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, and financial concerns are often inevitable. It can help to journal what's on your mind and try to identify what you can and can't control. If financial worries are keeping you awake, try labelling your thoughts by giving them a nickname like 'money'. Every time the thought pops

into your head, quickly divert it to a mental filing system, rather than getting trapped in a continuous loop of thinking about it.

4 GET COSY

Our home environments are stopping 14% of the UK from getting enough sleep. Five key things to improve this are:

1 Darkening down helps to inform the body that the day is over, and triggers the release of the sleep-promoting hormone melatonin. Wear an eye mask, fit shutters or blackout blinds if you need to and turn off any unwanted standby lights.

2 Check the room temperature. Ideally it should be a cool 16-17°C. Be sure to switch off central heating at night, and use multiple layers rather than a single duvet to allow you to quickly adjust your temperature.

3 Comfort is essential for sleep quality. Choose a mattress and pillow combination that are the ideal firmness, size, and material for your comfort needs.

4 Reduce noise by soundproofing your bedroom with lots of soft furnishings, such as rugs, heavy curtains and drapes on the walls. If you're really struggling, block out unwanted noise with earplugs or white noise.

5 Improve your bedroom air quality by growing naturally detoxifying plants such as aloe vera. Keep the window open or turn on a fan to improve ventilation. Maintain a stable humidity by avoiding drying clothes there.

5 BODY SCAN

If you wake up in the night for a prolonged period, try to stay in bed and rest, as it conserves energy, helps repair physically and consolidates memories. You can practice a simple meditation by accepting you are awake and mindfully focusing your attention on where your body connects with the bed. Each time your mind wanders onto thoughts, gently come back to the bed.



FACT
OR FAD?

Mouth taping

Why putting a stop to overnight mouth breathing can improve health.

Mouth taping (the practice of taping your mouth shut overnight) is a popular wellness trend promising those who try it a lengthy list of health benefits – from reduced snoring to fresher breath. But how exactly can this unusual nighttime ritual improve health, and is it really necessary?

The scientific thought behind mouth taping is that it stops us from breathing through our mouth – a habit that now affects more than 60% of us. This goes against our biology, advocates argue. We're designed to breathe through our nose, while the mouth is mainly intended for eating, drinking and talking. Technically, they say, we should only breathe through our mouth in situations where we can't easily breathe through our nose, such as during intense exercise or when our nose is blocked from a cold and allergy. ▶

Why is mouth breathing bad?

There's a reason why nature separated the two cavities, and that's because mouth breathing is not good for health. 'Mouth breathing lets in unfiltered, poorly humidified air, drawing pollutants and germs directly into the lungs,' says neuropsychologist Dr Elisabeth Honinx. 'This leaves you with a dry mouth, and can even cause conditions like sleep apnoea, where your breathing is repeatedly interrupted at night, decreasing your quality of life tremendously.'

Why do so many of us breathe through our mouths?

Stress is one of the main causes of mouth breathing, according to one expert. 'Over 70% of us don't breathe properly, and this is because we are stuck in fight, flight or freeze mode for the majority of our day-to-day life. With over 70% more demands on us than our grandparents had, it's no wonder people today are more stressed, and need to take time to decompress and balance our nervous systems,' says breathwork coach Sophie Belle. 'This leads us to gulp in more air, in the same way that you might need to if you were under attack from a tiger. This then becomes habitual and you forget how to breathe through your nose as you're supposed to.'

How to use mouth tape

Taping our lips together forces us to breathe through the nose and alleviates the health problems associated with mouth breathing. It really is as simple as sticking a piece of medical tape (not too sticky!) vertically across top and bottom lips, and you're good to go.

For those used to breathing via their mouth, it's normal to feel a little anxious or even panicky once the tape is on. In these cases, experts advise using the tape during the day to begin with.

'Using tape for just a few minutes while watching TV may be a good way to start before progressing to use when sleeping,' says holistic sleep coach Emily Whalley of Fox and the Moon. 'It's important to start slowly

and remove the tape if it doesn't feel comfortable.'

You don't need to use mouth tape forever, either. Sir Christopher Ball, co-founder of the Oxford Longevity Project, recommends using mouth tape every night for a few weeks to start with. 'I actually started using mouth tape a few months ago and, now that I have adopted nasal breathing as my default method, I only need to use the tape one night a week to keep the practice. If you start waking up with a dry mouth, it may mean you need to return to mouth taping,' he says.

So, now you know the facts behind the health craze, let's take a deeper look at the six main health benefits of mouth taping.

1 Stops snoring

Snoring affects 30 million people in the UK - including the snorer and whoever they may be sharing a bed with. Mouth taping can help to reduce snoring and sleep disruption for you or your partner. 'When you snore, it's usually because your airways are partially blocked, which can cause a vibration in the airways as you breathe,' says sleep expert and founder of Your Sleep Better Store, Doug Ralph. 'By forcing you to breathe through your nose, mouth taping can help to keep your airways open and stop your mouth from falling open, meaning you are less likely to snore.'



2 Reduced risk of sleep apnoea

More than 45% of Brits live with sleep apnoea – one of the main causes of sleep deprivation. Sleep apnoea is a condition in which your breathing is repeatedly interrupted during sleep due to a blockage. It may cause you to gasp for air during your sleep, snore loudly and have difficulty staying asleep. Alongside lifestyle changes such as losing weight, exercising, quitting smoking and drinking less alcohol, mouth taping may help to treat sleep apnoea. ‘Mouth taping can help to keep your airways open and allow you to breathe more easily, meaning you’re less likely to wake up feeling out of breath,’ explains Doug.

3 Reduced allergies

Mouth taping increases airflow to your lungs and improves the quality of the air you breathe. This is particularly beneficial if you suffer from allergies or respiratory conditions like asthma, pneumonia, COPD and more.

‘When you breathe through your nose, the air is warmed, filtered and humidified, which can help to improve the overall quality of your sleep by keeping your throat and airways moist,’ says Doug. ‘You’re less likely to be breathing in irritants, which could also help those suffering from allergies or respiratory conditions to sleep through the night without disruption.’


4 A calmer night’s sleep

Who would have thought mouth taping could directly improve your mood, too? According to Doug, mouth taping can help to reduce stress and anxiety levels, which can often wreak havoc with your sleep. ‘When you breathe through your nose, you activate the parasympathetic nervous system which is responsible for relaxation and rest,’ he explains. ‘By encouraging nasal breathing, mouth taping can help to promote relaxation and reduce stress, meaning less tossing and turning, and a general boost to wellbeing.’

5 No more tooth grinding

If you often wake up with an achy jaw, mouth tape could be your new best friend. ‘Mouth taping helps with proper mouth and jaw positioning, while also preventing night-time grinding of the teeth,’ says Sophie Belle, ‘It’s a great way to reduce those unnecessary jaw and tongue movements which can cause jaw pain and soreness while you sleep, while also helping to promote healthy breathing throughout the night. People have reported less teeth grinding when they practice mouth taping.’ Interestingly, HRT also seems to help some with tooth grinding.

6 Improved oral health

‘When you breathe through your mouth, it can cause your mouth to become dry and dehydrated, which can lead to bad breath and other oral health issues, such as tartar build-up and even tooth decay,’ says Doug. ‘By forcing you to breathe through your nose, mouth taping can help to keep your mouth hydrated, meaning fewer trips to the dentist.’ 





MOVE

of the month

~~~~~ Side lying ~~~~~

This simple exercise from Pilates expert Nathalie Clough helps to tighten and tone the waist and glutes. The best part? It can be done lying down.



For more exercises from  
Nathalie, head to [lifebody.io](https://lifebody.io)  
or follow her on Instagram  
[@nathalie.clough](https://www.instagram.com/nathalie.clough)

**CHECK  
YOUR FORM**  
Don't lift the leg  
too high or let it  
move the hips.

- 1** Lie on one side, resting your head on your arm. Make sure the legs and hips are stacked.
- 2** Reach away through the top leg and lift to hip height. Keep the reach through the leg as you lower it to gently touch the other – don't rest.

- 3** Repeat that movement eight times (on each leg), focusing on maintaining length in the legs and body.
- 4** To add a challenge, lift the leg to hip height and make small circle motions, then reverse the direction of your circles. Repeat on the other leg.

# The Centenarian Decathlon

Dr Peter Attia on the power of exercising. Not just for the sake of it, but to be a ‘kick-ass 100-year-old’.



What in the world is the Centenarian Decathlon? I’m not talking about an actual competition among 100-year-olds, although similar events do already exist: the National Senior Games, held every other year, brings together remarkable older athletes, some of them in their nineties and beyond. The record for the 100m dash for women

aged 100 and up is about 41 seconds.

The Centenarian Decathlon is a framework I use to organise my patients’ physical aspirations for the later decades of their lives, especially their marginal decade. I know it’s a somewhat morbid topic, thinking about our own physical decline. But not thinking about it won’t make it any less inevitable.

Think of the Centenarian Decathlon as the ten most important physical tasks you will want to be able to do for the rest of your life. Some of the items on the list resemble actual athletic events, while some are closer to activities of daily living, and still others might reflect your own personal interests. I find it useful because it helps us visualise, with great precision, exactly what kind of fitness we need to build and maintain as we get older. It creates a template for our training. ►





I start by presenting my patients with a long list of physical tasks, that might include some of the following.

- 1** Hike 1.5 miles on a hilly trail.
- 2** Get up off the floor under your own power, using a maximum of one arm for support.
- 3** Pick up a young child from the floor.
- 4** Carry two 2.5kg bags of groceries for a quarter of a mile.
- 5** Lift a 10kg suitcase into the overhead compartment of a plane.
- 6** Balance on one leg for 30 seconds, eyes open. (Bonus points? Eyes closed, 15 seconds.)
- 7** Have sex.
- 8** Climb four flights of stairs in three minutes.
- 9** Open a jar.
- 10** Jump 30 times with a skipping rope.

The full list is much longer, with more than 50 different items, but you get the idea. Once they've read it. I ask them to please select which of these tasks they want to be able to perform in their ninth, or better yet tenth, decade. Which ones do they choose?

All of them, typically. They want to be able to hike a mile and a half, or carry their own groceries, or pick up a great-grandchild, or get up if they fall down. Or play 18 holes of golf, or open a jar, or fly somewhere on a plane. Of course they do.

That's great, I say. You'll make that kid's day when you pick her up like that. But now let's do the maths. Let's say the kid weighs 10-15kg. That's basically the same as doing a squat while holding a 15kg dumbbell in front of you (i.e. a goblet squat). Can you do that now, at age 40? Most likely. But now let's look into the future. Over the next 30 or 40 years, your muscle strength will decline by about 8-17% per decade - accelerating as time goes on. So if you want to pick up that 15kg grandkid or great-grandkid when you're 80, you're going to have to be able to lift about 20-25kg now. Without hurting yourself. Can you do that?

I press the issue. You also want to be able to hike on a hilly trail? To do that comfortably requires a VO<sub>2</sub> max of roughly 30ml/kg/min. Let's take a look at the results of your latest VO<sub>2</sub> max test - and guess what, you only scored 30. You're average for your age, but I'm afraid that's not good enough, because your VO<sub>2</sub> max is also going to decline. So we're going to have to go ahead and cross that hike off your list. You can pull it off now, but you likely won't be able to do it when you're older. ►

***'Over the next 30 or 40 years, your muscle strength will decline by about 8-17% per decade'***

## What is VO2 max?

VO2 max is a measure of how much oxygen our body absorbs and uses while exercising. It's a good indicator of our aerobic fitness and tends to decline with age. We can test our VO2 max with a cardiopulmonary exercise test (offered by many doctors and fitness centres), or see a rough estimate by wearing a heart rate tracking device from brands such as an Apple, Garmin or Fitbit.

On it goes. To lift that 10kg suitcase overhead when you are older means doing so with 20-25kg now. To be able to climb four flights of stairs in your eighties means you should be able to pretty much sprint up those same stairs today. In every case, you need to be doing much more now, to armour yourself against the natural and precipitous decline in strength and aerobic capacity that you will undergo as you age.

Eventually, my patients get it. Together, we come up with a list of ten or 15 events in their personal Centenarian Decathlon, representing their goals for their later decades. This then determines how they should be training.

The beauty of the Centenarian Decathlon is that it is broad yet unique to each individual. Nor is it limited to ten events; for most people it ends up being more, depending on their goals. My version is tailored to my own particular interests, such as swimming and archery. It's also fairly aggressive, I admit, reflecting the importance of a high level of fitness in my life. So I would probably add in some of the following events:

- 11** Swim half a mile in 20 minutes.
- 12** Walk with a 14kg dumbbell in each hand for one minute.
- 13** Draw back and fire a 20kg compound bow.
- 14** Do five pull-ups.
- 15** Climb 90 steps in two minutes (VO2 max = 32).
- 16** Dead-hang for one minute.
- 17** Drive a race car within 5-8% of the pace I can do today.
- 18** Hike with a 9kg backpack for an hour.
- 19** Carry my own luggage.
- 20** Walk up a steep hill.

***'By fixing our aim on the Centenarian Decathlon, we can make every decade between now and then better as well'***






The Centenarian Decathlon is ambitious, no question. A 90-year-old who is even able to board a plane under her own power, let alone hoist a carry-on bag, is doing extremely well. But there is a method to the madness. These individual tasks are not out of reach. There are octogenarians, nonagenarians and even centenarians right now who are running marathons, racing bicycles, lifting weights, flying airplanes, jumping out of airplanes, skiing the Rocky Mountains, competing in actual decathlons, and doing all sorts of other amazing things. So all these events are within the realm of possibility.

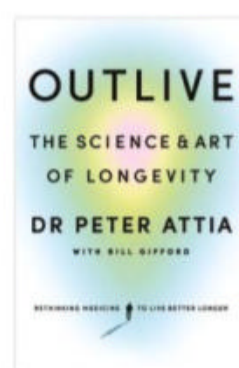
One purpose of the Centenarian Decathlon, in fact, is to help us redefine what is possible in our later years and wipe away the default assumption that most people will be weak and incapable at that point in their lives. We need to abolish that decrepit stereotype and create a new narrative – perhaps modelled after the old-school fitness guru Jack LaLanne, who kept doing his usual

rigorous daily workout right up until his death at age 96. Unlike most very long-lived individuals, he didn't just get there by accident or luck. He built and maintained a high level of fitness throughout his life, beginning in the 1930s, when very few people exercised regularly and 'fitness centres' did not yet exist. As he got older, he set out very deliberately to defy the stereotype of ageing as a period of misery and decline. He did the work, and he succeeded, giving us a glimpse of what an older person is truly capable of achieving.

If we are to follow in LaLanne's footsteps, we must stop pointlessly 'exercising', just because we think we are supposed to; banging away on the cross trainer at lunch hour. I promise, you can do better. I suggest you join me and start training, with a very specific purpose, which is to be kick-ass 100-year-olds. When my patients say they are more interested in being kick-ass 50-year-olds than Centenarian Decathletes, I reply that there is no better way to make that happen than to set a trajectory toward being vibrant at 100 (or 90, or 80) just as an archer who trains at 100m will be more accurate at 50m.

By fixing our aim on the Centenarian Decathlon, we can make every decade between now and then better as well.

With this as my goal, I now work out with the focus that I once directed exclusively towards cycling, swimming or boxing. It's not about being great at any one pursuit, but about being pretty good at just about everything. As Centenarian Decathletes, we are no longer training for a specific event, but to become a different sort of athlete altogether: an athlete of life. 



Extracted from *Outlive* by Peter Attia and Bill Gifford (£22, Vermillion). Copyright © Peter Attia and Bill Gifford 2023.

# Cold *shoulder*



Frozen shoulder is a painful and poorly understood condition that most commonly affects midlife women. Here, osteopath Anisha Joshi shares the very best evidence-based strategies for thawing locked joints, soothing pain and restoring movement.

## **What is frozen shoulder?**

Frozen shoulder is a condition where a shoulder becomes stiff and painful to move. It can last a number of months, sometimes years, and affects 2-5% of the global population. We're more likely to experience it if we're aged between 40 and 60, and if we're a woman. In fact, women are four times more likely to experience frozen shoulder than men.

We don't often spare a thought for our shoulders, but frozen shoulder can be extremely debilitating. The condition tends to progress through three stages (what osteopaths call freezing, frozen and thawing), and it can take up to 18 months to fully recover. In this time, it's common to experience pain and difficulty sleeping, and can be difficult to move the arm at all. These symptoms in combination can be quite difficult to manage, and often lead to low mood and frustration.

## **Talk us through the three stages.**

The first stage is 'freezing'. During this time, people experience chronic pain in the shoulder and arm that is constant. Any movement of the shoulder is severely limited.

After a number of months, patients begin to experience pain only at the end of the shoulder's range of motion. Osteopaths call this stage 'frozen'. Here, patients tend to have limited movement in the joint, along with a rigid feeling.

The final stage is known as 'thawing'. Thankfully, after a number of months the range of movement gradually starts to improve and the pain is minimal. ►



## Frozen shoulder



## Why are midlife women more affected?

It's believed that the fluctuating hormone levels during menopause may be why women get frozen shoulder more than men, and why they experience more pain. Researchers believe that when estrogen levels decline it may impact the way in which women experience pain and can feel more sensitive. It's also thought to impact quality of sleep and mood, both of which affect the way a body translates pain.

## If exercises are painful, should we stop or push through?

Movement is important for all muscles and joints. If you're able to lean into the pain it will help your recovery and strength around the frozen shoulder. However, if you experience more pain after exercise that lingers for more than 24 hours, go back to your healthcare professional and ask them to observe you doing your exercises or potentially adapt them.

## Does frozen shoulder go away on its own?

The pain of frozen shoulder will gradually improve on its own, however exercises may reduce the 18 months you're in pain, and also enable the shoulder to have a better range of movement quicker.

## Ease the pain

Exercises to help ease pain and restore shoulder mobility.

### WALL WALKS

Stand at arm's length away from a wall. Gently try to walk your fingers up and down the wall as if your fingers were legs. If this is too painful, stand closer to the wall and just go as far as you can. You'll notice you'll be able to get further as your shoulder improves.

### STICK ELEVATION

Hold the top of a stick or broom handle with the hand on the same side as your frozen shoulder. Use your strong arm to raise the broom, gently elevating and stretching the shoulder as far as it will go.

### EXTERNAL ROTATION

Tuck your elbow by your side and face the palms upwards. Keeping your elbow tucked in, slowly move your hand away from your body.

*'Fluctuating hormone levels during menopause may be why women get frozen shoulder more than men, and why they experience more pain'*



## How else can we thaw frozen shoulder?


Studies show that treatment with a physical therapist like an osteopath or physiotherapist can help to manage the pain and improve range of movement in 90% of cases. Taking oral anti-inflammatories may also help to encourage more movement in the joint by reducing the pain. In severe cases of frozen shoulder, where there's unbearable pain and no range of movement, a steroid injection can help ease the symptoms. This will enable the physical therapist to help manage the symptoms and the patient to conduct the exercises more easily.

There have been some studies to show that acupuncture may


help to regain certain movements in the arm when suffering with frozen shoulder. However, there are not many studies to really support this, so physical therapists and osteopaths will recommend that you only try this avenue of treatment if you wish to.

Another potentially helpful treatment is shockwave therapy – a set of acoustic pulses with a high-energy density – applied directly to an injured muscle or tendon. By stimulating the pain receptors, this treatment may cause tissue regeneration and analgesia. In simple terms, it may help to reduce the pain and increase the range of movement in a frozen shoulder.

## Can anything be done to prevent frozen shoulder in the first place?

The main causes of frozen shoulder are still unclear. We do know, however, that an injury or surgery that restricts movement of the shoulder can increase our risk, as can diabetes. As with all joints in the body, it's best to stay active and make sure the shoulder joint is mobilised regularly. 

**Anisha and her award-winning team have clinics in London, Cobham and Hitchin. For more information, visit [osteoallies.co.uk](https://osteoallies.co.uk)**  
**For more tips, follow Anisha on Instagram @osteoanisha**

A close-up photograph of a woman's torso and hands. She is wearing a white button-down shirt and a necklace with a small green pendant. Her hands are holding a single, vibrant green cannabis leaf with serrated edges. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

# Can CBD treat menopause symptoms?

Medical cannabis expert Mary Biles investigates whether CBD is a midlife must.

**F**or us midlifers, finding a natural product to support our hormonal balance and effectively manage unwanted symptoms like anxiety, poor sleep, painful joints and brain fog during the menopause can seem like an impossible task.

Encouragingly, anecdotal reports and some preliminary studies suggest that CBD, the non-intoxicating compound found in hemp and cannabis, might be just the health supplement many of us are looking for. Indeed, the likes of Meg Mathews and *Loose Women* panellist Andrea McLean have publicly shared how regularly taking CBD oil during the perimenopause and beyond has helped them feel like their former even-keeled selves.



### What is CBD?

CBD, or cannabidiol as it's known in scientific circles, is a naturally occurring compound found in cannabis and hemp. Thanks to its illegal status and psychoactive effects, cannabis tends to have a bad rap, with its medicinal properties largely ignored. However, prior to the last 70 years of prohibition, cannabis was safely used in folk medicine for everything from period pain to seizures.

Through scientific research, we now know that the cannabis plant contains hundreds of compounds called cannabinoids, of which THC (the bit that gets people stoned) is just one. CBD, the second most abundant cannabinoid, was initially assumed to be inactive due to its lack of intoxication. However, in the 1980s when Israeli scientists discovered CBD's anti-seizure

effects, everything changed. Since then, the compound has shown itself to have therapeutic potential in a host of conditions, such as anxiety, chronic pain and sleep disorders.

Despite cannabis still being classified as a class B drug (and illegal), CBD products can be bought legally in the UK, as they are extracted from hemp, which is essentially the cannabis plant with barely perceptible levels of THC. As a consequence, it's almost impossible to get high from taking CBD oil.

At this juncture, I should point out that THC isn't inherently bad, and many patients with conditions as diverse as ADHD, fibromyalgia and migraines benefit from legally prescribed medical cannabis preparations containing both CBD and THC. ►

## How does it work?

When we buy health supplements, we're not usually that interested in how they act upon the body. But when it comes to CBD and cannabis, it's worth understanding some rudimentary biological basics in order to appreciate the potential they show for our overall health.

CBD is believed to support the healthy function of our endocannabinoid system, a cell-signaling network running throughout our entire bodies that regulates pretty much every biological activity, including mood, immunity, reproductive health, pain, sleep, bone production, cell proliferation, and how well we manage stress.

The system was discovered at the beginning of the 1990s, when scientists were trying to understand how THC acts in the body. Not only did they discover receptor sites that THC binds with throughout the brain, central nervous system and immune system, but that the body also produces its own cannabis-like chemicals called endocannabinoids, one of which is named anandamide, after *ananda*, the Sanskrit word for bliss.

The feel-good, anti-inflammatory endocannabinoid anandamide is produced in the ovaries, and plays a vital role in the female reproductive system. Its levels even mirror the fluctuations of oestrogen throughout the menstrual cycle, although in contrast to how the endocannabinoid system is usually thought to work, it's actually oestrogen that controls the production of anandamide, rather than the other way round.

*'CBD is known to bind with serotonin receptors in the brain, possibly explaining its anti-anxiety effect'*

Because the endocannabinoid system is so new and its discovery is linked to cannabis, it tends not to be taught in medical school, and much still needs to be discovered about its relation with women's hormonal health. However, research now suggests its dysregulation almost certainly plays a part in many diseases, in particular conditions where there is an oversensitivity to pain, such as fibromyalgia, migraines and IBS. This might explain why patients report finding CBD and cannabis in general so helpful for managing these conditions, as they are essentially topping up their depleted endocannabinoid system.

CBD is also known to bind with serotonin receptors in the brain, possibly explaining its anti-anxiety effect, as well as TRPV1 receptors, known to mediate pain perception, inflammation and body temperature. All of which gives some biological basis as to why so many women report finding CBD helpful for managing the symptoms of the menopause.

## CBD and HRT

While there is no evidence to suggest that CBD directly balances the hormonal changes occurring during midlife, CBD is considered safe to take alongside HRT, and in general has been found to have very few side effects. However, for women who for whatever reason cannot be prescribed HRT, CBD products are certainly worth considering as a way to manage symptoms like anxiety, low mood, poor sleep and painful joints.

We know that during the menopause, as well as losing the protective benefits of oestrogen, levels of anandamide also drop. So supplementing with CBD or including other anandamide-boosting techniques such as cardiovascular exercise and even singing, might give us the endocannabinoid boost we need.

There's also evidence to suggest that CBD supplementation may have a place in postmenopausal health, with a preliminary study on menopausal mice showing that those given CBD had better bone health, more diverse gut bacteria and burned more energy than the non-CBD group.



# Try it yourself

If you're feeling CBD-curious but not sure how to find a decent product among the hundreds of CBD brands out there, here are some tips to help you on your way.



## 1 GO WHOLE PLANT

While I've been waxing lyrical about the benefits of CBD, reports show that full-spectrum products containing not only CBD but the other naturally occurring compounds tend to be more effective. I love Spirit of Hemp's organic cold-pressed range.

## 2 LOOK FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS

To make sure your CBD brand contains both what it says on the bottle and is free from any nasties like pesticides and mould, always look for products with certificates of analysis (COA).

## 3 AVOID FADDY PRODUCTS

If you're serious about your CBD, take it regularly as an oil or in a capsule, rather than in an energy drink or in novelty edibles like CBD hummus.




## 4 TRY A CBD MENOPAUSE PRODUCT

There are some interesting products out there, like Biogenic's Elle range that mixes CBD with menopause-focused ingredients such as clary sage, turmeric and black pepper.



## 5 BUY THE CBD BOOK: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CBD OIL

This was written by me and will guide you through the process of finding the best CBD oil product for you.

And finally, give CBD a good chance. Don't expect miracles overnight. Consistency is key and so is listening to your body. General advice is to gradually build up your dose until you start to feel an effect. This can occur with anything from 10mg to 50mg of CBD a day. And if you're lucky, you may just start to feel less anxious, sleep better and be in less pain than you were before. 

**This is  
health**



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A woman in a white coat is walking on a rocky beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong reflection in the shallow water. In the background, there are white cliffs. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# Silent cancers *know your risk*

Cancer isn't on anyone's second-half wish list. But by brushing up on signs and symptoms, we're more likely to catch it in its early stages. ▶

**S**ilent cancer is a term used to describe cancers that either do not show any noticeable early symptoms, or whose early symptoms can be mild and overlap with other less severe conditions,' says

Dr Ahmed El-Modir, consultant oncologist at Spire Little Aston Hospital ([spirehealthcare.com](http://spirehealthcare.com)). 'And this can lead to individuals not seeking help soon enough.'

Seeking help early is key, as the prognosis is often better if cancer is caught before it reaches an advanced stage. Here are six silent cancers and the symptoms to look out for.

## Bowel cancer

### SILENT SYMPTOMS

Persistent abdominal pain, bloating, cramps and changes in your bowel habits (e.g. constipation, diarrhoea or thinner stools). 'You may also notice blood in your stools, have the urge to open your bowels (even after recently passing stools), and unintentionally lose weight,' says Dr El-Modir.

### KNOW YOUR RISK

Nine out of ten cases of bowel cancer occur in those over 60, making age the biggest risk factor. Risk is also increased if we have a close family member (parent or sibling) who's had bowel cancer before the age of 50.

Lifestyle factors that increase the risk include smoking, heavy drinking, a sedentary lifestyle, being overweight, and following a diet low in fibre and high in processed or red meat.



Reduce the number of processed foods in your day-to-day diet.

## Cervical cancer

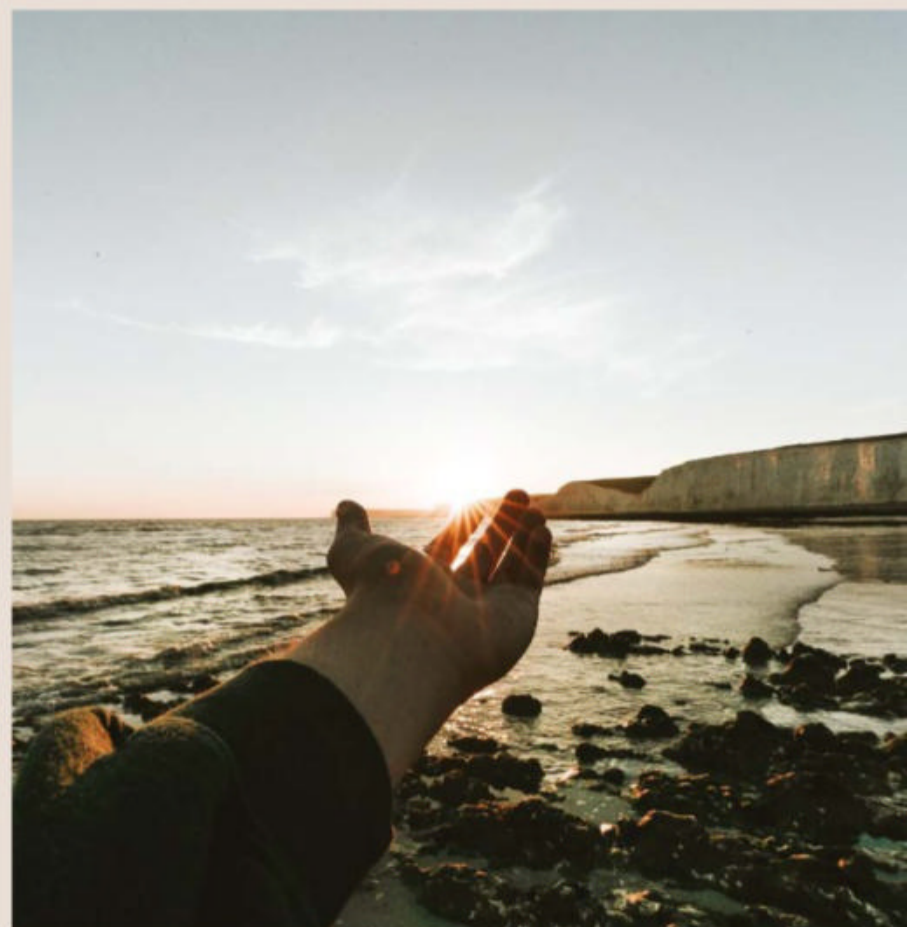
### SILENT SYMPTOMS

Cervical cancer is cancer that occurs at the entrance of the womb (the cervix).

'Silent' symptoms include vaginal bleeding in between your periods, during or after sex and after menopause, heavier periods, changes to vaginal discharge, pain during sex, and pain in the lower back, lower abdomen and pelvic area.

### KNOW YOUR RISK

'Almost all cases are caused by the sexually transmitted infection human papillomavirus (HPV),' explains Dr El-Modir. 'Consequently, in the UK, all women over the age of 25 are offered regular cervical screening to test for HPV infection.' The HPV vaccine also reduces the risk of cervical cancer. 'Cervical cancer is more common in those aged under 45 and those with a weakened immune system - for



example, due to HIV or AIDS. Our risk of cervical cancer is also higher if we've given birth to children before the age of 17, had multiple births, or previously had bladder, kidney, vaginal or vulval cancer.'



**Book in your next cervical smear test.**

## Liver cancer

### SILENT SYMPTOMS

'Many symptoms of liver cancer relate to digestion issues, such as nausea, vomiting, paler stools, darker urine and feeling full after eating only a small amount of food,' says Dr El-Modir. 'You may notice a lump on the top right side of your abdomen, feel pain in this area, and experience abdominal swelling that isn't caused by eating.'

Other symptoms include jaundice, where the whites of the eyes become yellow, pain in the right shoulder, unintentional weight loss, loss of appetite, fatigue, fever and generally feeling unwell.

### KNOW YOUR RISK

Liver cancer is more common in men, those aged over 60 and those with a close relative (sibling or parent) who have had liver cancer. Our risk is also raised if we have diabetes, gallstones, hepatitis, HIV, liver cirrhosis or are infected with liver flukes.



**Do you know your family's health history? If you can, ask**

**relatives for help making a list of any major conditions, going back to your grandparent's generation. Bonus points if you can also record the age of diagnosis.**

## Lung cancer

### SILENT SYMPTOMS

'Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the UK and mainly affects those aged over 40,' says Dr El-Modir. 'Symptoms include a persistent cough, breathlessness when performing activities that aren't usually a strain, coughing up blood, fatigue, loss of appetite, pain in your chest or shoulders, repeated or persistent chest infections, and unintentional weight loss.'

### KNOW YOUR RISK

'Seven out of ten cases of lung cancer are caused by smoking,' he adds. 'Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which is more common among smokers, is also a major risk factor.'



**If smoking is a habit you just can't quit, seek help from your GP.**

## Ovarian cancer

### SILENT SYMPTOMS

Many symptoms of ovarian cancer overlap with period symptoms,' says Dr El-Modir. 'These include abdominal bloating, back pain, fatigue and persistent pain or tenderness in the pelvic area.'

'Other symptoms include constipation, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, feeling full after eating only a small amount, unintentional weight loss, sudden urges to urinate and urinating more often.'

### KNOW YOUR RISK

'Women aged over 45 are most at risk, as well as women with diabetes or endometriosis, women carrying

BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, and those with a close female relative (mother or sister) who have had ovarian cancer. Smoking and being overweight also increases the risk.'



**If you're overweight, you don't need to drop several**

**dress sizes to reduce cancer risk. Research shows that losing as little as 5-10% of total bodyweight can have a significant effect.**

## Pancreatic cancer

### SILENT SYMPTOMS

'Many symptoms of pancreatic cancer relate to digestion, such as bloating, changes in your stools, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. You may also experience back pain and pain in the upper abdomen, which feels better when you lean forward and worse when you lie down or eat.'


'Other symptoms include jaundice, where the whites of your eyes become yellow, plus unintentional weight loss, loss of appetite, fever and fatigue.'

### KNOW YOUR RISK

'The risk of pancreatic cancer is higher if you smoke, drink heavily, are overweight or aged over 75. Although most cases of pancreatic cancer do not run in families, you are at increased risk if a close relative (parent or sibling) has had pancreatic cancer or if you carry a BRCA2 gene. Certain medical conditions also increase the risk, including chronic (long-term) pancreatitis, diabetes, gallstones and metabolic syndrome.'



**Reduce alcohol intake by scheduling drink-free days (Monday to**

**Thursday, for example).** 





# EAT *well*

It's all about fresh, delicious produce this time of year, so keep it simple with light meals for brighter days.

From light salad to hearty traybake – four ways with fennel on page 62



# My day on a plate

## Dr Thivi Maruthappu

Thivi is the UK's only dual-qualified dermatologist and nutritionist, specialising in how our diet affects skin health. Here, she shares a sneak peek at the skin-friendly snacks that get her through the day.

### I'm usually up quite early

My boys (aged ten, seven and five) tend to wake up at around 6ish, so I'm up at 5am to have a little bit of time to myself. I meditate (just ten to 15 minutes) and do the *New York Times* mini crossword and Wordle, before checking emails and planning what I have to do for the day. This is when I'll reach for a chai tea, packed full of anti-inflammatory spices (you can find my BeauTea chai recipe in my book).

### Snacks help me through the day

I have a container with two compartments (bought on Amazon very cheaply) and fill half with fruit and the other half with a handful of nuts. It takes no time to prepare and keeps me going during busy clinics. I adore nuts for their skin-loving benefits, healthy fats and protein.

### I try to GLOW at meals

I developed the acronym to help my patients (and me) remember how to balance their meals. A plate should include Greens, Lean protein, Oils (healthy fats) and Wholegrains. For me, that could be something like a turmeric chickpea curry with plenty of veggies, brown rice and a sprinkling of seeds on the top.

### Supporting my gut is crucial

This is so important for our skin, as the latest science has revealed an important connection called the gut-skin axis. I reach for probiotic foods like kimchi and kombucha on a regular basis.



## I never feel guilty about enjoying food

I truly believe we can enjoy all foods if we balance them in the context of our overall diet. Foods I love but don't eat every day include creamy pasta and pistachio ice cream.

## I'm known for my masala chickpea salad

It's always a huge hit with friends. It's made up of a crunchy salad base, topped with gently spiced chickpeas and a creamy kefir dressing. I serve it on a large platter in the middle of the table and we scoop it up with warm wholewheat pitta or sourdough bread. There's never any leftovers!

## I take supplements too

These include vitamin D 1000IU all year round, as my levels on blood tests are low – this is most likely due to my darker skin tone.

I also like collagen supplements, even though the science isn't yet that great to support them. I've personally found they do help with skin hydration, and I pick hydrolysed marine collagen because I don't eat much meat.



## THIVI'S TOP FIVE SKIN-FRIENDLY FOODS

- Avocado
- Oily fish
- Fibre-rich wholegrains
- Probiotics
- Anti-inflammatory spices




I also sometimes take a good-quality omega-3 supplement (500mg EPA/DHA daily) if I haven't been eating oily fish on a regular basis, but I don't take it every day. If you're vegan or vegetarian, there are algae-based alternatives, which I often recommend in the clinic.

## I keep alcohol to a minimum

At most, a couple of glasses of wine a week. I advise my patients with skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis and rosacea to keep alcohol intake relatively low as it can cause these to flare. There is also some research that it can contribute to premature skin ageing – so boring I know, but a few glasses a week shouldn't be a problem.

## My diet has changed as I've got older

As a junior doctor working all hours, I ate mostly in the canteen and out of a vending machine during night-shifts. Chocolate bars and fizzy drinks kept me going, along with a handful of supplements every day, which I thought would counteract my eating habits. Since studying nutrition science, I am firmly 'food first', and focus on getting everything I need through meals. 

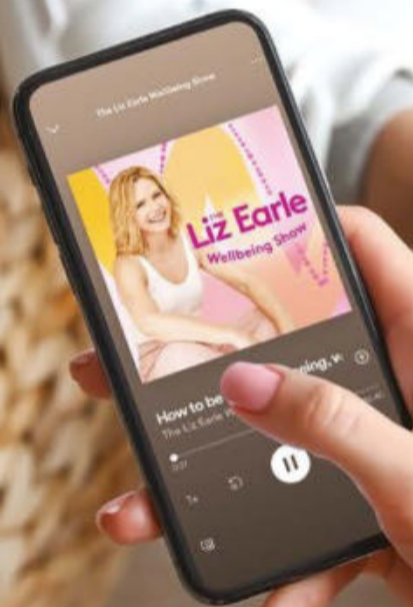


**Skin Food:**  
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# Wellness wisdom on the go

Liz speaks to top medics and familiar faces from the world of wellbeing to bring you practical wisdom for a better second half.

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**FAT**

Have you heard of MCT oil?  
It can help to boost brain  
function, curb cravings and  
fire up fat burning, says clinical  
nutritionist Stephanie J Moore. ▶

# M

CT oil is a tasteless, colourless and odourless fat that can be eaten off a spoon. Not very exciting, right? Well here's the exciting part. MCT stands for medium-chain triglycerides, which

refers to its molecular structure. Most dietary fats are made up of long chains of carbon (known as long-chain triglycerides), while MCT has shorter chains that are easier to break down into fast fuel. And it's this quick, clean energy that makes MCT oil so incredibly useful as a health aid – particularly in between meals and/or during a fasting window.

## Energy boost

MCT oil is unique in the way the body uses it – especially on an empty stomach. Unlike other fats and oils, it's metabolised by the liver very quickly. The liver converts the MCTs into ketones, a form of fast fuel that our cells (especially brain cells) love to use. Think of it like a quick sugar fix, but much, much better for you. Instead of using fast carbs like sugary snacks to provide you with an energy boost (which invariably leads to a rapid crash and drive for more sugar), MCT oil is a clean, healthy fuel for cells, sending the message to your body and brain that you're well-nourished and don't need to eat.

In fact, the brain loves MCTs so much that studies have shown it can improve cognition when taken by people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. As we age, our brain-processing speeds, retention of information, learning of new skills and even word-finding can deteriorate due to a reduction in brain energy. And we know this is made worse by depleted estrogen levels in midlife. MCT is a fantastic way to inject some fast fuel into the brain to keep cells nimble and delay brain ageing.

## Fat-loss friend

Because the body loves to use MCT oil so much, our cellular energy and functioning increases, hence we feel good, have great focus and concentration, and we are not, hopefully, distracted by the biscuit tin or other less-than-healthy yumminess. Rapid uptake of the MCT oil also means it won't be stored as body fat – it's burnt up too quickly for that to happen.

This might sound too good to be true, but the science is quite simple. Ketones are the form of fuel your body makes when burning body fat. If we've not eaten for more than 12 hours or so, the point at which the liver has run out of its stored fuel, we should then begin to burn body fat for fuel. Our stored fat then passes through the liver, where it's converted into ketones which supply fuel to most cells in the body (there are a few cells that can't use ketones, but very few). Our stored fat allows us to go for hours and, if needed, even days without food. It's how we survived throughout most of evolution when food was scarce.

In order to readily burn body fat for fuel, we need to have good metabolic health. Sadly, our modern sedentary and sugar-fuelled lives have left many people unable to readily switch on the fat burning when energy levels are running low – hence the urge to eat something sweet to top up energy supplies. If your body is out of the practice of burning body fat because of lots of snacking, long eating windows and a high starch and sugary

***'MCT oil is a clean, healthy fuel, sending the message to your body and brain that you're well-nourished and don't need to eat'***


diet, turning on the fat-burning fat can be tricky. This is where MCT is so very helpful, training the body to manage without a sugar hit every few hours and to prolong an overnight fast.

If you are prone to an energy crash mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon, and want to break the habit of a tea and biscuit, or cola and crisp hit, then MCT can be a fabulous tool. When you start to feel the urge to snack, or at the first signs of beginning to flag, take a teaspoon of MCT oil (you can have a teaspoon multiple times day if needed).

Better still, if you know that at a certain time of day or time of the month you're a sugar-monster, or if there's a long meeting coming up and you're likely to have a slump, then pre-empt these things happening by taking one teaspoon of MCT oil. Very quickly (literally within minutes) your body will be happily running on the ketones from the MCT oil. You'll find you don't get sugar cravings and your body and brain are energised and satisfied for a few more hours.

As such, MCT oil is a great aid for curbing sugar cravings, alleviating mental and physical energy crashes, is great for brain fog, and is a wonderful tool to support those trying to avoid snacking and eating between meals.

MCT oil is also really helpful for those experimenting with time-restricted eating, where they want to extend their overnight fasting window by a few hours for all the health benefits associated with fasting, but struggle to do so due to delayed fat-burning kicking in.

There are various forms of MCT oil. The one that tends to convert most readily into craving-busting energy is the C8 form, so look for 100% pure MCT oil (C8). Over time, you'll find you need it less and less to halt cravings, and eventually not at all, because the drop in snacking and sugar hits has allowed your metabolism to adjust to becoming a better fat burner. But, until then, use this handy, healthy oil as a super-fuel. 

## Stephanie's top tips

Break the snacking cycle with these nutritionist-approved MCT hacks.

### 1 START FAST

Generally speaking, most people do very well on two or three well-balanced, hearty meals a day. No snacking. If you can also reduce your eating window to eight to ten hours, leaving a fasting window of 14 to 16 hours, your brain, skin, body fat, digestion and immune system will all greatly benefit.

### 2 MORNING BOOST

If you're struggling to make it to the end of a fasting window, take one teaspoon MCT oil, either neat or in black coffee, to give you energy and stop hunger pangs throughout the morning. This is especially useful if you're planning to exercise in a fasted state.

### 3 EAT WELL

At meals, it's important to include nutrient-dense, wholesome foods in the form of varied and colourful high-fibre plant foods (i.e. veggies, beans, lentils or low-sugar fruits like kiwi and berries); a good portion

of protein (i.e. meat, fish, eggs, tofu, tempeh, mature cheese, and Greek or sheep's yogurt), and some healthy fats, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds.

### 4 SKIP SNACKS

Between meals, avoid snacking. This is much easier if you eat well-balanced, filling meals. If you find you're still looking for something to eat by mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon, have a teaspoon of MCT oil to keep you going until the next mealtime. Similarly, if you find you are getting peckish before bed and trying to break the habit of pre-bed snacking, have a teaspoon of MCT oil to stop you feeling hungry and ensure you can get off to sleep.

### 5 NIGHT AID

If you wake during the night, this may be due to a drop in blood sugar, which causes the brain to be stressed. Take a teaspoon of MCT oil to allow your brain to calm down and put you back to sleep.

# Maximise *micronutrients*

Micronutrients are essential for a healthy, happy body. Here, Sam Rice shares ten tips for squeezing them in to power up our diet.

## 1 Eat a wide variety of food

The best overall advice for maximising micronutrient intake is to eat a combination of fruit and vegetables, wholegrain carbohydrates, lean protein and healthy fat at every meal, as different food groups provide different nutrients.

## 2 Eat locally grown fruit and vegetables

It's estimated that by the time you buy produce at the supermarket, it may have lost up to half of its vitamin and mineral content, depending on how long ago it was picked. Signing up to a local veg box scheme or buying from a local greengrocer are good ways to ensure the produce you eat is as fresh as possible.

## 3 Cut them up

Cutting up fruit and vegetables before eating releases the nutrients by helping to break down the cell walls. For example, crushing garlic releases a compound called allicin, which can help to lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels.



## 4 Store your fresh produce properly

To slow down nutrient loss:

- Store all vegetables, except root veg, in the refrigerator.
- Store all fruit, except berries (this includes tomatoes and avocados), at room temperature and away from direct light.
- Cover cut fruit and veg with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent oxidation, and store in an airtight container in the fridge.





## 5 Vitamin D is key for calcium

Vitamin D is required to enhance the absorption of calcium, so consume vitamin D-rich foods (such as oily fish) with calcium-rich foods (such as Greek yoghurt).

## 6 Be careful with cooking

Some micronutrients are water soluble and sensitive to heat, especially the B vitamins and vitamin C. Cooking foods containing these vitamins in water can reduce their nutrient content. A good idea is to use them in soups, so any vitamins that have leached out are still consumed.

## 8 Animal sources are better for some micronutrients

If you are not vegan or vegetarian, the animal-based sources of some key vitamins and minerals are usually more bioavailable than plant-based sources. This is especially true for vitamins A and B, as well as iron, calcium, magnesium and zinc.

## 7 But cooking can be good

In some instances, cooking can actually increase the level of certain nutrients. For example, lycopene increases by 25% when tomatoes are cooked, and the bioavailability of beta-carotene – found in red, orange and yellow plants like tomatoes, peppers, carrots and sweet potatoes – is also increased by cooking.

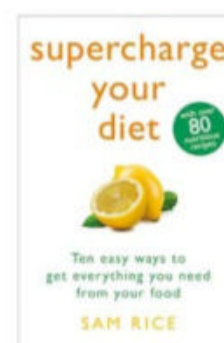
## 9 Absorb more of the nutrients you eat

The bioavailability of certain nutrients is aided by pairing with other foods. For example, foods containing the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K should be eaten with healthy fats like nuts, avocado or olive oil. To better absorb the iron from foods, pair with vitamin C from sources such as berries, citrus fruits, tomatoes and peppers.



## 10 Don't forget frozen

When fruit and vegetables are out of season, buy them frozen – they are cheaper, and also more likely to retain the micronutrients they contained when picked. 🍷



*Supercharge Your Diet* by Sam Rice is available now (£12.99, Headline Home)



## Pantry essentials

# Pass the protein

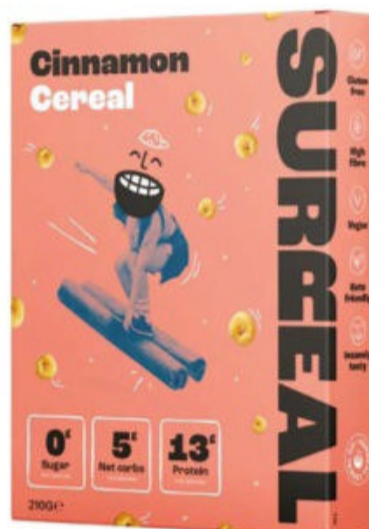
Food Editor Betty Beard shares delicious, protein-packed snacks to fuel busy days.



### Protein Works Superfood Bites – Banana & Cacao

Fancy something sweet?  
These are just the ticket.

From £4.19, [theproteinworks.com](http://theproteinworks.com)



### Surreal Cinnamon Cereal

Sugar-free cheerios  
with a cinnamon kick.

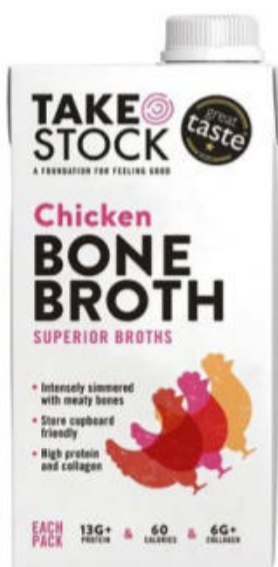
From £19.20, [eatsurreal.co.uk](http://eatsurreal.co.uk)



### The Honest Bean Co Roasted Fava Bean Snack

Delightfully crunchy and sure  
to satisfy a salty craving.

£3.50, [ocado.com](http://ocado.com)



### Take Stock Chicken Bone Broth

This superfood soup is  
great for skin and joints.

From £6.30,  
[takestockfoods.com](http://takestockfoods.com)



### Kallo Protein Packed Lentil Cakes

Top with cream cheese,  
avocado or hummus for  
a moreish mid-afternoon  
pick-me-up.

£2.25, [ocado.com](http://ocado.com)



### indi Tone

Blitz this plant-based powder with water, milk  
or into a smoothie for a quick protein fix.

From £25, [indisupplements.com](http://indisupplements.com)



**SPOTLIGHT ON**

# Leaky gut

Nutritionist and naturopath Mara Calvi explains how to spot, stop and shore up a leaky gut.

**A**s early as 450 BC, Hippocrates – the father of medicine – taught his students that all disease begins in the gut. This sentiment rings true to this day but, to truly comprehend its meaning, we must first understand how our gut works.

In a healthy state, the gut has a protective lining formed by tight junctions that are linked together. Tight junctions ensure that only nutrients (such as vitamins, minerals and amino acids) can pass from the gut into the bloodstream or lymphatic system.

The trouble begins when cracks appear in the gut lining, causing the tight junctions to broaden and allow particles other than nutrients to pass through. These can be extremely small particles of food, parasites, toxins and bacteria that enter the bloodstream and lymphatic system, and cause inflammation, leading to gut problems. This is what we call ‘leaky gut syndrome’, because the gut begins to leak unwanted substances.

As a result, a person could experience a wide range of symptoms, the most common of which are bloating, belching, diarrhoea, constipation, colitis, abdominal discomfort, skin issues, joint pain, allergies and food intolerances. Leaky gut symptoms are not always physical, and can also include depression, anxiety, brain fog and fatigue.

If these cracks in the gut are not repaired, symptoms often worsen and the inflammation spreads, resulting in more difficult-to-manage conditions such as IBS, Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, diverticulitis, eczema, psoriasis, gastric reflux, gastritis and oesophagitis, as well as autoimmune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, Hashimoto’s and coeliac disease.

*‘Leaky gut symptoms are not always physical, and can also include depression, anxiety, brain fog and fatigue’*

### **What causes leaky gut syndrome?**

Poor food choices certainly play a role. These include processed foods, ready meals, sugar, canned foods and anything with a long shelf life. These foods contribute to increased inflammation, which leads to cracks in the gut lining and leaky gut.

Similarly, some beverages such as alcohol, coffee and black tea can cause inflammation if over-consumed. They can be corrosive to the gut lining and dehydrate the body, preventing it from absorbing essential B vitamins. Vitamin B deficiency not only causes digestive issues, but can also contribute to hormonal imbalances and neurological issues. These drinks should be enjoyed in moderation.

Long-term medication use can also have an impact on the gut’s health. This is most commonly seen with medications like proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), antibiotics and steroids. Of course, these are sometimes necessary, and we can’t just stop taking them if we’re sick. But we can help the body to ensure it counteracts the side effects of medications on the gut. This is easily accomplished by eating the right foods.

The chemicals ingested when smoking can also cause stomach lining rupture, and this is a habit worth kicking as it can also have an effect on our ►

liver function and cardiovascular system, as well as our gut and lungs.

While food intolerances are a symptom of leaky gut syndrome, they also contribute to increased inflammation and lining cracking. Gluten and dairy are the most common intolerances. Gluten intolerance is usually caused by the chemicals used by gluten producers to protect wheat from parasites. Dairy intolerance, on the other hand, can develop naturally as we age. When we reach adulthood, many of us stop producing the enzyme that breaks down dairy products. This is why we may have difficulty digesting dairy at times and become intolerant to milk-based products.

Also known as ‘the silent killer’, stress is to blame for the emergence of many health issues, and our gut is not exempt from this. Finally, some people may be genetically predisposed to developing gut issues. This does not imply that all is lost; it’s simply a matter of easily adapting our lifestyle to support our bodies accordingly.



## How do I know that my gut leaks?


Functional tests are a good way to find out if you have leaky gut syndrome. They are non-invasive, informative, quick to complete and can be taken in the comfort of your own home. Tests are available online, but I would recommend seeking the help of a naturopath to select the right ones for you and help you interpret the results.

I tend to recommend a lactulose/mannitol test, which provides information on how large the tight junction gaps are. This aids in determining which particles pass from the gut into the bloodstream.

*‘Stress is to blame for the emergence of many health issues, and our gut is not exempt’*

Next, a comprehensive stool analysis can help determine the level of inflammation in the gut. Results can help us understand the health of our digestive processes and how well we’re absorbing nutrients from our diet. It can also provide data on metabolic markers as well as indicate the presence of parasites, good bacteria, fungi and yeast.

Finally, a food intolerance test can help to pinpoint which ingredients to avoid while we’re working on healing our gut, the ones we can consume with parsimony, and the ones that are acceptable to eat.

Because there is no one-size-fits-all solution, the best approach is to seek guidance from a naturopath and follow a personalised nutritional protocol tailored to your symptoms and needs. Over time, this approach can address and relieve symptoms, and restore gut health at a micro level. Do-it-yourself plans where lots of food groups are eliminated from the diet can sometimes cause more harm than good. 

# 8 ways to shore up a leaky gut

The first step is to go through your kitchen cabinets and throw out processed foods, replacing them with the following items.

## 1 VEGETABLE VARIETY

It's important to have a variety of colours on your plate. Choose carrots, cabbage (red or white), broccoli, parsnips and pumpkin. Each brings different vitamins and minerals necessary for the body.

## 2 PRIORITISE PROTEINS

Make sure you meet the recommended protein intake guidelines of 0.75g per kilogram of bodyweight every day. This helps dampen cravings for less gut-friendly foods.

## 3 KEEP YOUR CARBOHYDRATES

The body needs carbohydrates to create the necessary energy – which is mainly used by the brain. Choose pulses, chickpeas, mung beans, kidney beans and vegetables rich in gut-friendly fibre.

## 4 HEALTHY FATS

Be sure to include omega-3 fatty acids in your diet. These are found in salmon, mackerel, sardines and algae (a good plant-based source), and help to reduce inflammation and rebuild the gut lining.

## 5 MUST-HAVE MAGNESIUM

Magnesium helps regulate cortisol and blood pressure. It gets flushed out of the body when we're stressed, so it's crucial to replenish stores. People with low magnesium levels (most of us, actually) are likely to be more stressed and are at a greater risk of having a leaky gut. Seaweed, spinach and Swiss chard can be excellent sources of magnesium, as are some beans, nuts, and seeds like pumpkin, sunflower and sesame. Avocados and bananas also contain magnesium.

## 6 GO NUTS!

Nuts are a good source of gut-friendly B vitamins. Snacking on almonds, cashews, peanuts or pistachios helps replenish our levels.



## 7 SOOTHING SIP

Herbal teas such as vervain, chamomile, peppermint or ginger can be wonderfully soothing to the digestive tract.

## 8 FERMENTED FRIENDS

The secret to improving your gut is to replenish it with good gut flora that restores the gut and increases immunity. Examples of beneficial fermented foods are kefir, miso soup, kombucha, sauerkraut, tempeh and kimchi.



You can find out more about functional gut health tests and Mara's work at [somavitalitywellness.com](https://somavitalitywellness.com)

AGE *Well*

# GO MICRO

Size isn't everything. Nadine Fresko, founder of Little Leaf, spills the beans on these small but mighty vegetables.



## What are microgreens?

Microgreens are basically just very young vegetables, usually harvested around one or two weeks old, when the first pair of leaves has developed and had a chance to photosynthesise.

### Why are they worth eating?

The first pair of leaves that a seedling develops (called cotyledons) are the most nutrient-dense leaves on the entire plant, as they absorb all the nutrients from the seed and also benefit from photosynthesis. The nutrients we're talking about differ from one microgreen variety to another, but include a range of essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that help our bodies function healthily in countless ways. As the plant grows taller, nutrients get diluted with cellulose and water, so it's best to catch them at this early stage. In fact, studies have shown that microgreens are up to 40 times more nutrient-dense than the same vegetable at maturity.

### Are some microgreens more nutritious than others?

Yes. Each microgreen variety has its own benefits, but the best-known from a nutrition perspective is broccoli, which also happens to be one of the easiest microgreens to grow. Micro broccoli is an excellent source of sulforaphane. This has been linked to countless health benefits that seem too good to be true, but have been demonstrated in scientific studies. Some of those benefits include improved heart health, skin health and even anticancer activity.

#### GIVE IT A GO

Get 15% off Little Leaf microgreen growing kits when you use the code LEW15OFF at [littleleaf.uk](https://www.littleleaf.uk)  
Offer valid until 31 December 2023.


### How do we eat microgreens?

I like to use my microgreens as a garnish. They've been used by chefs for years because they're so delicate and pretty. I sprinkle a pinch of micro broccoli or pea shoots on top of pretty much every meal to instantly elevate the look of the dish and add tasty nutrition. I also keep the stronger-flavoured varieties like radish, rocket and cress on hand for adding delicious heat to sandwiches and burgers.



## Are they easy to grow?

Nothing beats eating tasty veggies grown from seed with no nasty chemicals or plastic packaging. And growing microgreens couldn't be easier.

We've seen kids as young as five years old have success with our at-home kits – if you're reading this sentence, you'll be just fine! We only sell varieties that are genuinely easy to grow at home with no special equipment. The microgreens will need light to photosynthesise, so use a sunny windowsill or just pop them under a desk lamp (a regular white LED is fine, no fancy grow light needed). Once fully grown, harvest your crop with clean scissors and they're ready to go. 

# Brunch

Rise and shine – the weekend starts here, with three brilliant brunch ideas.

# *time*

RECIPES, PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING  
BY NICO GHIRLANDO





## Lemon, ricotta and poppy seed pancakes with blueberries **V**

**MAKES 6-8**

**LOW SUGAR**

- 110g almond flour
- 30g milled flaxseed
- 1 banana, mashed
- 15g chia seeds
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 lemon, juice and zest
- 115g ricotta
- 100ml milk
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds
- 4 tbsp butter

**TO SERVE**

- Blueberries and cinnamon powder

**1** Whisk the almond flour, flaxseed, banana, chia, eggs, lemon juice and zest, ricotta, milk and poppy seeds together, and leave to rest for half an hour.

**2** Melt the butter in a sauté pan before ladling in the rested batter to make pancakes approximately 10cm in diameter.

**3** Cook until golden (approx. six to eight minutes), then flip over and cook the other side. Be careful, as they are more fragile than traditional pancakes. Repeat until you have used up the mixture.

**4** Serve with the blueberries and a pinch of cinnamon powder.

## Spiced scrambled tofu with almond and watercress pesto on sourdough toast **Vg**

**SERVES 2**

- 50g almonds
- 50g watercress
- 1 clove of garlic
- 5g nutritional yeast
- 60ml olive oil
- 250g silken tofu
- 2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 1 tbsp chives, chopped
- 6 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 2 spring onion, sliced
- 1 green chilli
- Sourdough toast to serve
- Sea salt

**1** Blend the almonds, watercress, garlic, yeast and olive oil with a pinch of salt in a blender to make the pesto. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

**2** Gently warm the tofu in a pan with the turmeric and chilli flakes, stirring occasionally until it breaks up into small curds.

**3** Remove from the heat and stir in the chives, tomatoes, spring onions and chilli, then serve on sourdough toast with the pesto.

**HIGH PROTEIN**



## Broad bean, spinach, feta and dill omelette

### SERVES 4-6

HIGH  
PROTEIN

- 250g spinach
- 6 eggs
- 50ml milk
- 50g broad beans, squeezed out of their skins
- 150g feta
- 20g dill, chopped
- Glug of olive oil
- Sea salt and black pepper

### TO SERVE

- Green leaves such as rocket or watercress

**1** Add the spinach to a frying pan and cook until wilted. Allow to cool a little, then squeeze out as much moisture as you can and roughly chop.

**2** Whisk the eggs with the milk until frothy, then add the spinach, broad beans, feta and dill.

**3** Heat the oil in the pan and gently pour in the mixture. Cook on a medium heat for eight minutes or so, then put under a hot grill until the top is lightly browned and just set.

**4** Leave to cool for a few minutes, then turn out onto a plate and serve with green leaves.





# Eat the season

As spring turns to summer, we're eating the best of British produce.

In early summer, British berries come into their own. Think freshly pressed elderflower cordial and cherries laced through breakfast yoghurt. And don't hold back adding fruit to savoury dishes, too. Strawberries are a treat with salad leaves, halloumi and balsamic vinegar.



## Seasonal shopping list

- Asparagus
- Aubergine
- Beetroot
- Broad beans
- Cauliflower
- Carrots
- Chard
- Cherries
- Courgette
- Cucumber
- Elderflower
- Gooseberries
- Lettuce
- New potatoes
- Pak choi
- Peas
- Peppers
- Radishes
- Raspberries
- Rhubarb
- Rocket
- Spring onions
- Strawberries
- Watercress

● Blitz the flesh of a roasted pepper with a handful of walnuts, a squeeze of lemon juice and a glug of olive oil for a simple and delicious dip.

● Roast asparagus stems wrapped in Parma ham with a drizzle of olive oil for 15 minutes at 180°C/ 350°F. Great as a starter or as part of a brunch.

● Toss cooked peas, radish slices, mint leaves and crumbled feta in some extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice for a refreshing summer salad.

# Your daily veg

An earthy dish packed full of fresh, seasonal veggies.



## Warmed asparagus and lettuce

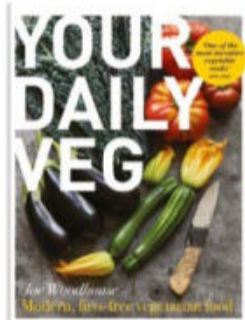
**SERVES 4** as a light snack or side

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 small onions, cut into eighths and separated into petals
- 500g asparagus, woody ends snapped off, sliced 1cm thick on the diagonal
- 1 mushroom stock cube, dissolved in 200ml hot water or mushroom soaking water (from 10g dried mushrooms) or vegetable stock
- 4 heads of baby gem lettuce, quartered lengthways
- 15g mint leaves, finely chopped
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook for ten to 12 minutes, stirring often, until the onions soften. They should still hold their integrity in the final dish, so don't cook them until collapsing.

**2** Add the sliced asparagus to the pan and toss well to combine. Keep stirring for one minute, then add the stock. Simmer for three minutes.

**3** Once the asparagus is tender, remove from the heat and add the lettuce, turn to coat with the cooking liquid and wilt the lettuce. Season to taste. Finally, stir in the mint and serve.



*Your Daily Veg* by Joe Woodhouse (£17, Kyle Books) is out now

This is a lovely way to take these fresh ingredients to the next level. Just taking the rawness away takes them to a different place. I love the mushrooms' welcome depth and earthiness, and this is why I like to keep mushroom stock cubes on hand as a way of quickly adding that flavour to dishes without soaking and chopping dried mushrooms. If you have the time and dried mushrooms to hand, do go down that route. If you do, adding the finely diced dried mushrooms is a welcome touch. Make sure to have lots of crusty bread to mop up the juices.

# 4 WAYS WITH FENNEL

From salad to traybake, make the most of this crunchy bulb's delicate aniseed flavour.

RECIPES, PHOTOGRAPHY & STYLING BY NICO GHIRLANDO





Roast fennel and  
radish herby  
spelt bowl

## Roast fennel and radish herby spelt bowl

HIGH  
IN  
FIBRE

### SERVES 4

- 3 or 4 fennel bulbs, depending on size, trimmed and quartered
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 200g spelt
- 750ml vegetable stock
- 20g parsley
- 15g mint
- 10g basil
- 15g coriander
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 150g pomegranate seeds
- 200g radishes, finely sliced
- 2 tbsp tahini beetroot dressing, to serve (see Liz's Larder, page 70)
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Put the fennel in the roasting tray, season and drizzle with a little olive oil. Place the tray in the oven and roast for 30 minutes, then remove and leave to cool a little.

**2** Meanwhile, cook the spelt in the stock according to the packet instructions, drain and leave to cool.

**3** Finely chop the herbs and mix with the remaining olive oil, lemon zest and juice, then stir into the cooled spelt. Add the pomegranate seeds.

**4** Serve the fennel, radishes and herby spelt in bowls with the tahini beetroot dressing.



## Pan-fried scallops with fennel and apple salad

LOW  
CARB

### SERVES 4

- 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed and finely sliced (keep the fronds)
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored and finely sliced
- 1 lime, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp natural yoghurt
- 15g fresh dill, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 12 large scallops (about three per portion)
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- Drizzle of olive oil
- Sea salt

**1** Put the fennel and apple in a large bowl and toss in the lime juice and zest.

**2** Stir in the yoghurt, fresh dill and caraway seeds, and gently mix. Set aside.

**3** Warm the oil in a heavy-based sauté pan until very hot, almost smoking. Place the scallops clockwise around the edge of the pan, as if matching the hours on a clock-face. That way, they will all be in the pan a similar amount of time when it comes to taking them out.

**4** Season and cook each scallop for a minute, then flip them over, starting at the top and working round the pan. Cook for a minute more, add the butter to the pan and baste each scallop.

**5** Remove from the heat and place onto kitchen paper. Sprinkle over the garam masala.

**6** Serve the scallops with the fennel salad, a drizzle of pan juices and olive oil, plus any remaining fennel fronds.









## Italian sausage traybake with fennel, preserved lemon and parsley

ONE  
PAN

### SERVES 4-6

- 25ml olive oil
- 2 large fennel bulbs, quartered
- 8 Italian fennel sausages
- 4 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 2 preserved lemons, quartered
- 1 small red onion, peeled and sliced
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 25g curly parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp wholegrain Dijon mustard, to serve
- Green salad, to serve
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan and briefly sear the fennel on each side until golden.

**2** Lay the fennel, sausages, garlic, preserved lemon wedges and onion in an oven dish, scatter over the fennel seeds and parsley, then season with a little salt and pepper.

**3** Put the tray in the oven and roast for 30-40 minutes, until the sausages are cooked through and the fennel has softened.

**4** Serve with a little Dijon mustard and a green salad.

## Lamb chops with fennel and orange salad

### SERVES 4

HIGH  
IN  
VIT C

- 8 lamb chops
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed and finely sliced
- 2 oranges, peeled and finely sliced
- 100g cherry tomatoes, halved
- Orange dressing (see Liz's Larder, page 70)
- Wholemeal flatbreads, to serve
- Sea salt and black pepper

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Drizzle the chops with the olive oil and season well. Heat an ovenproof sauté pan on the hob over a high heat.
- 2** Once the pan is hot, add the chops and sear on each side for a minute until golden, then remove from the heat. Brush each chop with mustard and sprinkle with the cumin seeds.
- 3** Place the pan in the oven and roast for ten to 15 minutes, depending on how well you like them cooked. Remove from the oven and set aside to rest while you assemble the salad.
- 4** Put the fennel, orange slices, tomatoes and dressing in a large bowl and gently toss.
- 5** Serve the chops with the salad and some wholemeal flatbreads.





# LIZ'S LARDER

Dress to impress: three recipes  
to elevate any salad.





## Tahini beetroot dressing **V**

- 75g tahini
- 1 small beetroot, cooked
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 150g Greek yoghurt, or a dairy-free alternative
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Sea salt

**1** Add the tahini, beetroot, lemon juice and olive oil to a blender and blitz until smooth. Set aside in a bowl.

**2** Fold in the yoghurt and spices, and season to taste with salt. Thin with a tablespoon or two of water.

**3** Pour the dressing into a jar and store in the fridge for up to three days.

## Orange, mustard, soy, lime and sesame dressing **Vg**

- 2 oranges, zest and juice
- 1 tbsp wholegrain Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp tamari soy sauce
- 1 lime, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- Sea salt

**1** Put all the ingredients into a bowl and whisk until emulsified.

**2** Taste and adjust the seasoning, with either a little more salt or a dash more lime juice.

**3** Pour the dressing into a jar and store in the fridge for up to three days.

## Green goddess dressing

- 2 anchovies (swap for eight black Kalamata olives to make vegetarian)
- 1 clove of garlic
- 75g Greek yoghurt
- 100g fresh parsley
- 50g fresh tarragon
- Small bunch of chives
- ½ lemon, juice
- Sea salt

**1** Put all the ingredients into a blender and process until bright green and smoothly blended. Scrape down the sides with a spatula every so often to make sure everything gets mixed.

**2** Mix in 100ml water to thin, then taste and adjust the seasoning with either a little more salt or a dash more lemon juice.

**3** Pour the dressing into a jar and store in the fridge for up to three days.

# Elderflower and grapefruit summer spritz

We're toasting Liz's 60th with this bright citrus non-alcoholic cocktail, using Mighty Brew Kombucha.

## SERVES 6

- Ice cubes
- 2 pink or red grapefruits, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 750ml bottle of Mighty Brew Elderflower Kombucha
- Mint leaves

- 1** Take six glasses and fill them with ice cubes.
- 2** Combine the grapefruit juice, lime juice and kombucha in a large jug and stir gently.
- 3** Divide between the six glasses.
- 4** Garnish with mint leaves and slices of grapefruit and lime.

## P.S.

If you'd like to go boozy rather than non-alcoholic, you can always add a dash of gin!

HIGH  
IN  
PROBIOTICS





# Drink

Made with Mighty  
Brew Kombucha.  
Use LIZLOVES for 10% off,  
[mightybrew.com](https://mightybrew.com)



# Simple

# SUPPERS

Take the stress out of midweek meal-planning with fuss-free recipes to please everyone.

RECIPES, PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY NICO GHIRLANDO

## MONDAY

### Creamy smoked aubergine and lemon wholegrain pasta with pine nuts and basil **V**

#### SERVES 4

- 1 aubergine
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp yoghurt (Greek or coconut)
- 400g wholegrain fusilli
- 50g pine nuts, toasted
- 1 bunch of basil leaves
- 75ml extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Char the aubergine all over on a gas flame or under a very hot grill until starting to blacken. Place on an oven tray and roast for about 40 minutes until soft. Remove from the oven and leave to cool a little before peeling off the skin. Set the flesh aside.
- 2** Add the flesh of the aubergine to a blender with the lemon juice. Blitz until smooth. Season and stir through the yoghurt.
- 3** Cook the fusilli until al dente, then drain and toss with the aubergine, pine nuts, half the basil and olive oil.
- 4** Season and scatter with the basil leaves and lemon zest before serving.





## TUESDAY

### Piri piri chicken thighs with courgette ribbons and sweet potato fries

#### SERVES 4

- 2 red peppers
- 2 long red chillies
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp oregano leaves
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 8 chicken thighs
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large courgettes
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Put the red peppers on a tray and roast for 25 minutes, or until the skin is starting to blacken. Remove from the oven and leave to cool a little, then scrape off the skin and remove the seeds. Turn the oven down to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.

**2** Put the flesh of the peppers in a blender with the chillies, paprika, lemon juice, oregano, vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Blitz until smooth, then coat the chicken thighs on an oven tray.

**3** Slice the sweet potatoes into fries and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place in an oven tray and spread evenly. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes, turning occasionally.

**5** Roast the chicken thighs in the oven for 20 minutes until the juices run clear.

**4** While cooking the chicken, slice the courgettes into ribbons with a vegetable peeler and toss in a little oil and salt. Serve with the chicken and sweet potato fries, along with a little mayonnaise or yoghurt if you like.

## WEDNESDAY

### Roast feta, pea and thyme sesame filo parcels with herby lentils **V**

**SERVES 4**

**30  
MIN  
DINNER**

- 145g feta
- 100g frozen petits pois
- 5g thyme, chopped
- 5 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus 1 tsp for brushing the pastry
- 8 sheets filo pastry

#### FOR THE LENTILS

- 1 can cooked green lentils
- 1 small handful of mint, finely chopped
- 1 large sprig of rosemary, finely chopped
- A few sprigs of thyme, finely chopped
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Crumble the feta into a bowl with the peas, thyme and three tablespoons of the sesame seeds. Season, add two tablespoons of olive oil and mix well.

**2** Lay a sheet of filo on a clean, dry work surface and fold the sheet in half. Brush around the edges with oil and spoon a tablespoon of the mixture into the middle. Then fold over the filo from corner to corner.

**3** Brush with a little olive oil as you go to seal the edges, folding until you have a parcel. Brush the top with more oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Repeat until you've used all the feta mixture.

**4** Add the parcels to an oven tray lined with baking paper and bake until golden and crisp (approx. 12-14 minutes), then remove and set aside.

**5** Place the lentils in a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and stir through the herbs to serve alongside the filo parcels. Warm the lentils in a pan first if you'd prefer them hot.



# THURSDAY

## Tofu banh mi with wholegrain baguette and kimchi

ONE  
PAN

- 250g firm tofu
- Glug of groundnut oil
- 200g mushrooms (closed-cup or chestnut), finely chopped
- 1 carrot
- 1 stick of celery
- ½ cucumber
- 15g mint leaves
- 2 tsp cider vinegar
- 4 mini wholegrain baguettes
- 4 tbsp kimchi

**1** Wrap the tofu in kitchen paper and press between two plates with a weight on top (e.g. a tin of tomatoes). Leave for half an hour.

**2** Cut the tofu into long slices and heat a sauté pan with the oil. Fry the slices until golden all over, then set aside on some kitchen paper.

**3** Add the mushrooms to the frying pan and cook them until the liquid has evaporated. Put in a blender and blitz until smooth. Leave to cool.

**4** Finely shred the vegetables and mint leaves, and dress with a little cider vinegar.

**5** Slice the baguettes in half and spread each with the mushroom paste. Top with cubes of tofu, the shredded vegetables and kimchi. Put the baguette lids on and serve.





## FRIDAY

### Salmon and asparagus brown rice pilaf

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 medium onions, finely sliced
- 2 salmon fillets
- 200g wholegrain basmati
- 1 tbsp green raisins (or sultanas)
- 350ml vegetable or fish stock
- 100g asparagus spears
- 50g walnut halves
- 20g chopped parsley
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve
- Sea salt and black pepper

**1** Heat the olive oil and butter in a wide, heavy-based pan.

Add the onions and cook over a medium heat until softened and starting to colour.

**2** Cut the salmon into 2cm chunks and add to the onions, along with the basmati rice, raisins and stock.

**3** Put the lid on the pan, bring to the boil, then immediately reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Leave to cook for around 30 minutes,

until the rice is cooked and the water has absorbed.

**4** Meanwhile, cook the asparagus in boiling, salted water for three to four minutes. Remove from the heat and plunge into cold water to stop them overcooking.

**5** Add the asparagus to the cooked rice and top with the walnut halves and a handful of chopped parsley. Serve in the pan along with the lemon wedges.

Kind to your  
skin and wallet:  
the best budget  
beauty buys on  
page 90





A bright, minimalist bedroom with white linens, a gold mirror, and a window with sheer curtains. The room is softly lit, creating a clean and airy atmosphere. In the foreground, a bed with white sheets is visible. To the left, a gold-framed mirror stands on a small table. In the background, a window is covered with light-colored sheer curtains, and a small potted plant sits on a wooden side table.

# LOOK *well*

Put your best face forward with expert tips  
and tricks from those in the know.

LIVE *well*



# Botox *for.* *hair*

We take a closer look at this up-and-coming smoothing treatment.

**D**on't flinch! Despite its catchy name, 'hair botox' does not, in fact, involve any needles at all. Rather, hair botox is a non-invasive deep-conditioning treatment that smooths hair cuticles in a similar way to how Botox relaxes fine lines and wrinkles on the face.

Hailing from Brazil, it's rapidly gaining traction in the UK, with devotees swishing glass-like sheets of hair in before-and-after social posts. It is, they say, a 'gamechanger' for fighting frizz.

Hair botox delivers similar results to that of other keratin treatments on the market, but is more focused on improving hair health than straightening hair. It's also considered a more natural alternative to other smoothing treatments, as it contains no harsh chemicals or fumes, and is free from formaldehyde-releasing agents.

Words: Rosie Fitzmaurice

## Who's it for?

'I discovered hair botox when I was looking for another solution for my unruly hair,' says Ondine Cowley, artistic director at Gielly Green in Marylebone.

'I'd walk out of the sea and my hair would turn into a frizz-ball,' she says. Now Ondine formulates her own hair botox products, which are produced in Brazil, and distributes them to salons across the UK.

While hair botox is not necessarily unsuitable for any hair types, it's most beneficial for those with thick, curly locks that are prone to frizz. Similarly, it can help to define hair that feels fluffy and shapeless, or that poofs in humidity. And if you spend lots of time blow-drying or straightening hair on a daily basis, then ►

hair botox is a semi-permanent solution that could save you some serious time and effort (it usually lasts between two and four months).

Hair botox can also inject new life into grey hair. 'Hair botox can have incredible results on coarse or wiry hair with white pigment, as it makes your hair feel really soft and youthful again,' Ondine says. 'My clients often say they wish they'd discovered this 30 years ago.'

However, she adds, the treatment isn't necessary for everyone. If you have naturally very straight hair and you're after more body, then it's probably not worth it.' Contrary to what some proponents say, this 'won't make your hair thicker, it'll just improve the condition of it'.


Flavia Lima, treatment specialist at Neville Hair & Beauty in London's Fitzrovia, explains that hair botox can be tailored to your specific concerns. 'Some people want their hair to be straighter after the treatment, but most just want to condition it, so it feels silky but still has movement and body, and can hold a wave,' Lima says. 'Hair botox is activated by heat, so once you've had the treatment and wash your hair, you can spend a few minutes rough drying it and it'll look like you've just had a blow dry.'

Is hair botox suitable for coloured hair? Yes, in that it can help to repair damaged lengths and split ends, but if your hair is dyed, your stylist will add a bluey/purple product into the mix to protect the colour and prevent it from lifting.

## How does it work?

Unlike Botox itself, which is a patented formula, there are multiple hair botox products on the market, so it's worth doing your research into what a salon is using. That said, one of the key ingredient is hyaluronic acid, which coats and penetrates the hair cuticle, filling out any gaps caused by damage and boosting hydration within the hair shaft. This is usually accompanied by an infusion of natural oils, shea butter (which is rich in fatty acids), and a cocktail of proteins and collagen, which all work together to seal and strengthen split ends, and, ultimately, impart a sleek, mirror-like shine.

The whole process takes around two to three hours. First, your stylist washes the hair with a sulphate-free shampoo to open up the cuticles, before the hair botox is applied root to tip. It's left on for between 20 minutes and an hour beneath a plastic cap, during which you may be positioned under a lamp. The solution is rinsed off before hair is blow dried, and straighteners are used to iron in the treatment to ensure the product penetrates deep within the hair shaft.

The result is a glossy, sleek mane that's easier to manage. So, is the treatment for you? Hair botox is an investment, with prices ranging from £150 to £350 (and upwards in some cases, depending on the salon). If coarse or poofy hair feels like the bane of your life - which for some evidently it does - then this is a solution that could significantly cut down time on your haircare routine. 

*'Hair botox can have incredible results on coarse or wiry hair with white pigment, as it makes your hair feel really soft and youthful again'*



Try it yourself

# At-home frizz fighters

Skip the salon and cut costs with these tress-taming heroes.



### John Frieda Frizz Ease Extra Strength Serum

A time-tested budget buy that delivers. *£7.99, boots.com*



### Briogeo Farewell Frizz Blow Dry Perfection & Heat Protectant Crème

Never skip heat protectant. Your hair will thank you. *£22.75, cultbeauty.co.uk*



### JVN Complete Air Dry Cream

No heat needed: this frizz-fighter is designed for air-drying days. *£23, jvnhair.co.uk*



### Philip Kingsley Pure Colour Frizz-Fighting Gloss

Our Editor's favourite. This miracle gloss tames frizz and imparts a healthy shine. *£26, philipkingsley.co.uk*



**VAN CLARKE**  
HEALTHCARE FOR HAIR®



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Available in 500ml & 100ml



### LifeSaver UV Leave-in Styling Treatment

Enjoy superior colour-fade defence and protection from sun or sea damage with this unique formula that nourishes and protects to slow the ageing process. Naturally derived ingredients condition deeply to repair broken bonds, keeping your hair young and supple. This luxurious styling treatment will smooth even the frizziest of hair, giving you surf babe looks or natural waves. Use a little as a blowdry balm to help smooth frizz, boost shine, and hold your style for longer.

Available in 500ml



### LifeSaver ULTRA

The INTENSE version which has everything you love about LifeSaver original but with DOUBLE the concentration of our unique repairing complex, Hydrabond Rx™. It radically and rapidly transforms your hair, giving it extraordinary health and vitality, with less shrinkage, less breakage and less splitting.

Available in 325ml and 100ml

*If you've never tried LifeSaver, you're missing a trick.* Hello Magazine

*Once you've tried this, you'll quickly understand why it's been named the LifeSaver!* The Handbook

# Fresh face

As the seasons (and years!) roll by, we need different things from our foundation. Use these MUA-approved tricks to get more from your favourite formula.

**F**oundation might not seem as exciting as glistening eyeshadows and candlelit highlighters, but it's the unsung hero behind a fresh face. It can instantly pull a look together and fool the world into thinking we've had a great night's sleep.

But finding the right product can be tricky. First, there's the task of picking the right shade. Then there's the formula – a satin, matte or luminous finish? Or perhaps a tinted moisturiser or BB cream? And what about SPF? It's no wonder that, to many, the makeup counter can feel like a minefield.

When we do eventually find the right base (after much trial and error), it's understandable we might be reluctant to switch things up. But, as we age, our skincare and makeup needs change. The matte foundation stick we swore by in our thirties may no longer be the best option. In fact, makeup artist Tilly Ferrari ([tillyferrari.com](http://tillyferrari.com)) recommends seeking out rich, moisturising products for more mature skin: 'Anything that gives moisture and hydration. Look for foundations containing hyaluronic acid and, if you have rosacea (which older skins are more prone to), it's also great to look out for calming ingredients such as centella asiatica.' ►



## Mix 'n' match

It's not just our skin that changes. The passing seasons can also have an impact on how products perform. From a summer holiday spent in the sun to a long winter hibernation – there's never going to be a one-size-fits-all foundation. But we don't necessarily have to shell out on a selection of different products. 'It's a myth that you need to buy multiple shades of foundation a year,' reassures makeup artist Jennifer Oliver ([jenniferolivermakeup.com](http://jenniferolivermakeup.com)). 'But our skin tones can change so much throughout the year, that having the right tools to adapt your foundation is key.'

Jennifer recommends buying a foundation that suits your 'base' colour (i.e. your natural skin tone during the spring and autumn) and adapting it with gradual face tanner throughout the winter, and tinted bronzing gel in the summer.

We might also need to adjust the texture of our favoured foundation as the seasons change. This can be done by simply switching up our application technique or mixing in other products. Skin tends to be drier during winter, for example, so a richer, hydrating foundation may suit our needs best. However, as the weather gets warmer, a heavy base can be more of a hindrance. The solution? A few drops of moisturiser mixed in with a pea-sized amount of base will sheer out any formula. Applying this with a stippling brush (rather than a traditional foundation brush) can also help deliver a lighter, airbrush-like application.

Similarly, if we want to cheat the luminous glow of a tinted moisturiser on an evening out, we can add a few drops of liquid illumination to a long-wear foundation. That way, our base will stay in place while also giving off a subtle radiance. And if healthy, glowing skin is really what you're after, try mixing a few drops of face oil into your foundation.

*'It's a myth that you need to buy multiple shades of foundation a year'*



## Troubleshooting

Even with the most flawless shade and formula match, it's not uncommon to run into occasional issues with application along the way. And even beauty industry veterans have days where their foundation just isn't behaving as it should. It might settle into fine lines or pill up into little balls on the face. These are just some of the mishaps that can turn a flawless base into a disaster.

Tilly recommends making sure skin is prepped properly. 'A mild exfoliator (my secret weapon is Nars Light Reflecting Multi-Action Treatment Lotion) is an amazing pre-makeup routine,' she explains. Regularly incorporating AHA and BHA acids into our skincare routine can also help to ensure we have a smooth canvas when it comes to applying foundation. 'Applying plenty of moisturiser to the areas where fine lines tend to be most visible also prevents foundation gathering there,' she continues.

Application is key too. 'Rather than applying thick layers of product (popular on social media), apply foundation first to the back of your hand and in thin layers to your face – building coverage slowly,' Tilly adds. 'Then set foundation in place with a setting powder of your choice. To avoid this looking powdery or cakey, I like to apply some setting spray to a fluffy brush, then press and roll this over the area.'



Our five favourites

## All about the base

A helping hand to the best skin ever.



**1 Ciaté London Dewy Bronze Glossy Cheek Tint**

Warm up your foundation for summer with this buildable bronze gel. *£19, [ciatelondon.com](http://ciatelondon.com)*



**2 RMS Beauty Un Cover-up Cream Foundation**

Oh-so creamy but not lacking in coverage, this foundation glides over fine lines. *£59, [spacenk.com](http://spacenk.com)*



**3 Catrice Cosmetics True Skin Hydrating Foundation**

A full-coverage foundation that nourishes skin with hyaluronic acid and watermelon seed extract. *£6.95, [justmylook.com](http://justmylook.com)*



**4 ELF Hydrating Primer Serum**

This skincare-infused serum delivers glow and preps the face for a flawless finish. *£10, [elfcosmetics.co.uk](http://elfcosmetics.co.uk)*



**5 Sculpted by Aimee Velvet Veil**

Lock down your look with this featherlight finishing powder. *£19, [sculptedbyaimee.co.uk](http://sculptedbyaimee.co.uk)*

# Save THE DAY

Get great skin on a budget with our pick 'n' mix skincare routine.

STEP  
1

## CLEANSE

Healthy skin starts with a thorough cleanse. Most will benefit from cleansing morning and night, though those with very dry or sensitive skin may prefer to skip a morning wash in favour of an evening cleanse to remove SPF and any makeup. Take Goldilocks' advice when choosing water temperature – not too hot and not too cold – and be sure to thoroughly rinse away the cleanser. Any remnants left on the skin can cause congestion or get in the way of other skincare products absorbing fully.



## 1 Superdrug Vitamin E Hot Cloth Cleanser

If cleansing without a cloth is unthinkable, try this budget beauty hero.

£5.99, [superdrug.com](http://superdrug.com)

## 2 Superdrug Me+ Salicylic Acid Cleanser

Salicylic acid works deep into the pores for a thorough clean. Perfect for oily or combination skin.

£7.99, [superdrug.com](http://superdrug.com)

## 3 CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser for Normal to Dry Skin

Much-loved by the Wellbeing team, this skin-fortifying cleanser is enriched with ceramides and hyaluronic acid.

£11.50, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 4 Superfacialist Vitamin C+ Skin Renew Cleansing Oil

Nothing melts away makeup like an oil cleanser. This one is enriched with vitamin C for a brightening effect.

£12, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 5 Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water

Sweep the day away on a cotton pad with this gentle micellar water.

£3.95, [superdrug.com](http://superdrug.com)



## STEP 2 TREAT

Once skin has been thoroughly cleansed, it's time to layer up our nourishing ingredients. If skin-ageing is your primary concern, opt for ingredients that encourage collagen production and skin renewal, such as bakuchiol or retinol. If skin looks dull or lacklustre, an antioxidant serum can work wonders. Hydrating heroes such as hyaluronic acid improve the appearance of all skin types, while exfoliating acids can be called upon once or twice a week to buff away dead skin cells.

## 1 Boots Ingredients Bakuchiol Serum

This powerful plant extract can reduce the appearance of fine lines, restore firmness and even out skin tone and texture. All for under a tenner!

£7, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 2 Botanics Revive & Protect Postbiotic Serum

Black tea kombucha is the antioxidant star of this skin biome booster. Perfect for those living in polluted areas.

£8.99, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 3 Revolution Skincare 3% Vitamin C Serum

A staple in any skincare routine, vitamin C supports collagen production, protects skin from environmental damage and restores radiance.

£8, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 4 Byoma Brightening Serum

Everyone will benefit from the winning combination of hyaluronic acid and niacinamide. Apply daily for healthy, happy, hydrated skin.

£12.99, [boots.com](http://boots.com)

## 5 B. Multi Acid Retexturising Facial Pads

A blend of glycolic and fruit acids to buff away dead skin cells and boost glow. Jaw-droppingly affordable and effective.

£1.49, [superdrug.com](http://superdrug.com)

STEP  
**3**  
SEAL

Next, seal your hard work in place with a moisturiser. This will help support the skin's barrier and keep much-needed moisture in. How heavy we choose to go depends on our skin type. Dry, stressed or compromised skin might need a moisturiser followed by an oil (particularly overnight), while others may only need a lightweight gel moisturiser.



**1 CeraVe Moisturising Cream**

This dermatologist-designed cream works a treat on all skin types.  
*£10, boots.com*

**2 The Ordinary 100% Organic Cold-pressed Rose Hip Seed Oil**

At night, rub a few drops between palms and press on top of your moisturiser to cocoon skin in moisture-retaining protection.  
*£9.70, boots.com*

**3 Simple Water Boost Hydrating Gel Cream**

Prefer something on the lighter side? Opt for this gel cream.  
*£6.95, superdrug.com*

**4 Boots Ingredients Hyaluronic Acid Moisturiser**

Boost hydration without blowing your budget.  
*£5, boots.com*

**5 Superdrug Vitamin E Skin Oil**

This affordable antioxidant oil protects skin from environmental damage as well as moisture loss.  
*£4.49, superdrug.com*



## Cost-cutting tips

- Choose a moisturiser containing hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, bakuchiol or niacinamide, and nail your treat and seal steps in one.
- SPF aside, we tend to apply more product than we need. A pea-sized amount of serum is plenty, as is a blueberry-sized serving of cleanser and moisturiser.
- Get the most bang for your buck by investing in the treat and protect steps. You can afford to scrimp on a more basic cleanser or moisturiser.

### STEP 4

## PROTECT

End your morning routine on a high with a good-quality SPF. We've selected creams with SPF 50 for maximum protection, but be sure to apply enough. Experts estimate we need a generous quarter teaspoon (1.5ml) for our face and neck. We recommend borrowing a teaspoon from the kitchen and measuring this out once or twice until you have a sense of what it looks like in practice.



1



2



3



4



5

### 1 Ambre Solaire Anti-Dryness Super UV Protection Cream SPF 50+

This cruelty-free cream is hypoallergenic and water resistant. *£12, boots.com*

### 2 La Roche-Posay Cicaplast Baume B5 SPF 50

An SPF balm that can be applied to lips as well as the face. It's been formulated with dry, sensitive skin in mind. *£11, boots.com*

### 3 Bioderma Cicabio Repairing Cream SPF 50+

This broad-spectrum SPF doubles as a soothing moisturiser with hyaluronic acid and antibacterial zinc. *£10, lookfantastic.com*

### 4 Bondi Sands Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50+

Cooling aloe vera and vitamin E star in this non-greasy Aussie hero. *£6.99, lookfantastic.com*

### 5 Nivea Sun UV Face Shine Control SPF 50

Keep shine in check with this mattifying, ocean-friendly formula. *£7.99, superdrug.com*



# HPR

HPR is the new retinoid on the block, promising to turn back the clock on skin ageing. We ask Harley Street's Dr Sam Bunting to explain the skincare science behind its rising popularity.



Retinoids are a family of skincare ingredients derived from vitamin A. ‘They are probably the most powerful tool we have to improve our skin,’ says Dr Sam Bunting ([drsambunting.com](http://drsambunting.com)). ‘They influence in excess of 3,000

genes that operate within skin.’

‘Retinoids are responsible for many skin functions, and influence things like cell turnover, the cellular pathways behind skin ageing, breakouts, pigmentation and redness... it’s quite extraordinary how much they do,’ she adds.

## So, what is HPR?

HPR is also known as hydroxypinacolone retinoate, or granactive retinoid. ‘It’s the next generation of the retinoid family that has the skin community very excited,’ says Dr Sam. ‘That’s because it harnesses excellent efficacy with a much-improved irritation profile compared to older, cosmetic-grade retinols.’

In simple terms, while traditional retinols can cause redness, irritation and even skin peeling, HPR delivers strong results but fewer sensitising side effects.

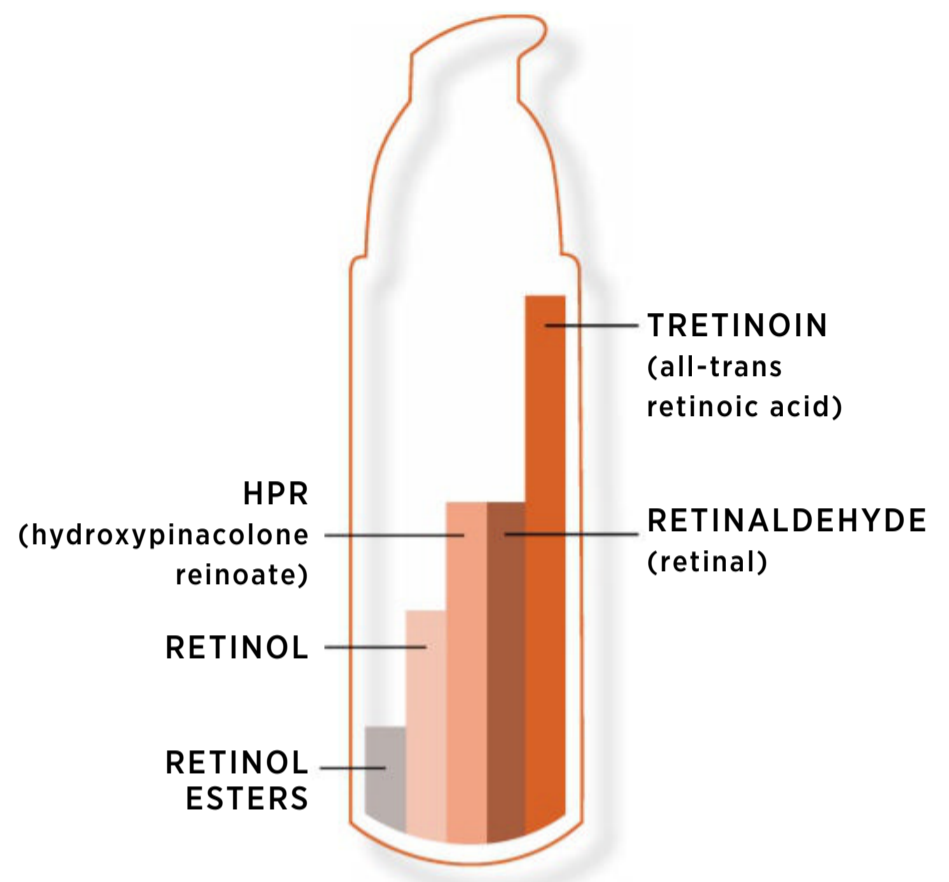
## How does it work?

‘HPR can bind directly to retinoid receptors inside skin cells to switch on or alter gene expression,’ says Dr Sam. ‘This leads to the production of new proteins, like collagen which improves the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It can also speed up cell turnover, make your skin more even toned, unclog pores and improve blood supply to the skin.’

## What are the advantages of HPR?

‘HPR doesn’t require a chemical reaction to become active, like other over-the-counter retinoids, such as retinol or retinaldehyde,’ says Dr Sam. ‘It’s ready to go. It’s also very stable, which means it lasts and remains effective over the duration of your product’s shelf-life.’ ▶

## RETINOID STRENGTHS



## Retinoid revision

Can you tell your retinol from your retinaldehyde? Here’s what you need to know...

‘The gold-standard retinoid is all-trans retinoic acid (or tretinoin),’ says Dr Sam.

This is available with a prescription and must be started at a low dose and gradually built up to avoid too much skin irritation.

Over-the-counter, we can choose from retinol, retinaldehyde, HPR and retinol esters (such as retinyl propionate). These differ in strength, with HPR and retinaldehyde coming out on top. ‘HPR is similar in efficacy to retinaldehyde, but its superior stability makes it a better option practically in my view,’ says Dr Sam.

HPR also behaves a lot more predictably in skincare formulas, Dr Sam explains, which lends itself to being combined with other helpful actives in multi-tasking serums. ‘Bakuchiol, for example, has a synergistic effect on issues like wrinkles and pigmentation in the skin, which is why I’ve combined it with HPR in both Flawless Nightly Serum and Nightly Pro,’ Dr Sam explains.

And, finally, like retinol, retinaldehyde, ‘phyto-retinols’ and retinol esters, HPR is widely available without the need to secure a prescription.

### Who’s HPR for?

‘HPR is beneficial for most people, in truth,’ says Dr Sam. ‘Retinoids are a skincare fundamental in my approach to both patients and my own skin,

and HPR is incredibly well-tolerated given the results it can deliver.’

‘In more severe cases of acne, I may need to step up to a prescription product,’ she adds, ‘especially if there’s scarring present.’

### Should HPR be combined with other retinoids?

‘I tend to stick to using one retinoid at a time,’ says Sam. ‘When results plateau, then think about increasing the potency if your skin goals have not been achieved.’


### How can we introduce HPR into our routine?

‘My Flawless Nightly Serum is the perfect introduction to HPR for a newbie,’ says Dr Sam. ‘The formula

is balanced with calming anti-inflammatory ingredients and it’s multitasking, so great for everything from congestion, breakouts, fine lines and pigmentation.’

‘Start off applying it every two to three days at night, and build up to daily use over a few weeks,’ she advises. ‘Strip out any other actives from your routine to keep things simple, and use sunscreen daily. That’s it.’

### What should we look for when buying HPR?

‘Airless, opaque packaging is always a good idea to maintain the integrity of the active ingredients in a formula,’ says Dr Sam. ‘Aim for 2-5% HPR, depending on your experience with retinoids.’ 

## Try it yourself

# Meet the A-team

Get the best results from our favourite HPR retinols.

## SUN SAFE

*Like all retinoids, HPR makes skin more sensitive to UV rays. Apply a good-quality SPF daily. See our budget recommendations on page 93.*

**BUDGET BUY**



### The Ordinary Granactive Retinoid Serum 2% in Squalane

This bestselling budget formula is available at 2% and 5% concentrations. **£10.70,** [cultbeauty.co.uk](http://cultbeauty.co.uk)



### ELF Cosmetics Youth Boosting Advanced Night Retinoid Serum

This beginner-friendly serum stars 1% HPR, as well as protective antioxidants and hyaluronic acid. **£22,** [elfcosmetics.co.uk](http://elfcosmetics.co.uk)



### Dr Sam's Flawless Nightly 2% Retinoid Serum

A well-formulated, multitasking retinoid that blends bakuchiol, azelaic acid and niacinamide with HPR. A stronger 5% formula is also available for retinoid regulars. **£46,** [drsambunting.com](http://drsambunting.com)



# Bye bye under-eye



MUA Letitia Sophia shares how to vanish dark circles in three simple steps.



1

## Plump + prep

It's important to use the right skincare products before applying any makeup, as the skin around our eyes is very delicate. I reach for **Murad Retinol Youth Renewal Eye Serum** (£82, [murad.co.uk](http://murad.co.uk)), which nourishes and treats fine lines around the eyes. Another product I love is **Charlotte Tilbury Magic Eye Rescue** (£49, [cultbeauty.co.uk](http://cultbeauty.co.uk)), as it gives an instant lifted and plumping effect to skin around the eyes.



2

## Tone it down

Colour correcting is key when trying to combat darkness under the eye. I find that using two different shades of concealer works best: one to cancel out and neutralise the darkness and another to brighten. First, apply a peachy/orange concealer that will help to cancel out any dark blue tones under the eyes. Next, layer on top a concealer that is close to your natural skin tone or a shade lighter to brighten the area. **Huda Beauty GloWish Bright Light Sheer Concealer** (£24, [cultbeauty.co.uk](http://cultbeauty.co.uk)) is brilliantly lightweight and buildable.



3

## Light touch

When working on more mature skin, I use my fingers to apply corrector and concealer, as I can melt the product into the skin and prevent it from looking too heavy. If working with fingers is too messy for you, try a **Beautyblender** (£17, [boots.com](http://boots.com)). This blends concealer flawlessly into the skin and absorbs minimal product, meaning you can control how much you're applying. The goal is bright, fresh under-eyes, so keep product to an absolute minimum – less really is more!

Feeling blah?  
We lift the lid on  
anhedonia on  
page 102



# LIVE *well*

Thought-provoking ideas and simple resets to improve your mind, outlook and relationships.

# OBJECTS OF DESIRE

From peaches and cream to dusty pink, opt for soft, muted pastels.

**Little Greene  
Dorchester Pink paint**  
Open the door to the  
prettiest pale pink.  
From £5.25,  
[littlegreene.com](http://littlegreene.com)



**European linen  
tablecloth**

Keep spills at bay with  
100% natural linen in  
delicate raspberry.  
£89, [pigletinbed.com](http://pigletinbed.com)



**Issey bolster cushion cover**

Mustard cushion cover in sumptuous  
velvet. Why wouldn't you?  
£35, [oliverbonas.com](http://oliverbonas.com)



**Framed plant print**  
Still-life print in a black frame – art doesn't get easier than this.  
*£30, johnlewis.com*



**Bath mat**  
Plush hotel chic from the comfort of home.  
*£38, anthropologie.com*

**Denby Quartz Rose dinner plate set**  
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# FEELING *'blah'?*



If life is feeling a little flat and grey, 'anhedonia' may be to blame. Tanith Carey, author of *Feeling Blah?* joins the dots on how this condition can dial down our ability to feel joy, and what we can do to restore it.

## What is anhedonia?

Anhedonia is loss of enjoyment in life. It can surface as feelings of 'blah', numbness, feelings of being 'stuck', and as if you are sleepwalking through life. You may notice things that used to make you feel good don't do the trick any longer. It could be anything from that celebration you are 'supposed' to be enjoying, but don't really, to not feeling the chills from the music you've always loved. You may also find that senses, like touch and taste, are less intense. That means it can also affect your sex life, because touch, and even orgasms, don't feel as good. ►



## How does it differ from depression?

Anhedonia is often a symptom of major depression. But it is also a standalone condition.

It doesn't necessarily mean you are depressed. If you have standalone anhedonia, you may not be happy, but you may not be miserable either. But you have probably lost delight in the little things. Anhedonia can make you feel like the balance in your brain has tipped – and boredom, apathy and weariness are drowning out your enjoyment of the good things in life. You keep going, but it feels like your emotions have flat-lined.



## Why is joy hard to keep hold of?

Our brains were designed to receive measured releases of dopamine to motivate us to meet our basic needs. Since convenience became the currency of modern culture, every product and service we use is designed to keep dopamine coming in deluges. When everything is provided for you, it's not surprising that this very primal pleasure system gets overloaded – and metaphorically 'short-circuit'. Over time, our reward system becomes less sensitive and more blunted. Gradually, our brain's neurons can lose their dopamine receptors, so it no longer circulates as easily. The result is that it can get harder to hit the highs and feel excitement or real pleasure. When everything is designed to be pleasurable, nothing is.

## What happens to our brain during anhedonia?

As with any research into emotional states, there isn't one simple, easy answer. After all, your brain is a dense, complex mass of interconnecting neural circuits, and there are many ways the reward process in the brain can get thrown off course. But one big contributor will be that the brain chemical dopamine is a 'Goldilocks' molecule. Having too much or too little can derail the process.

Some brains will make less dopamine. Some will make too much. Some brains will have fewer receptors for it, or have receptors that don't grab onto it as well. The dopamine could also be broken down too fast or reabsorbed by the synapses too rapidly – or the flow of dopamine could be inhibited by other neurotransmitters. In some brains of people with anhedonia, the brain's alarm system, the amygdala, seems to over-react from the start, disrupting the journey. Research studies have found that there can be a breakdown in communication between the different hubs on the reward path. Inflammation, caused by factors like stress or poor diet, may also interrupt dopamine's release. ►

## How bad is your 'blah'?

So if you don't meet the criteria for depression, it's time to pin down what your 'blah' feels like, so you can start to tackle it. Let's establish a firm baseline going forward. Circle the numbers below, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, then come back to it fortnightly as you take steps to shift your mood.

- I feel chills when I hear music I like  
**1 2 3 4 5**
- I feel able to let go enjoying myself in social situations  
**1 2 3 4 5**
- I really enjoy my food  
**1 2 3 4 5**
- I wake up most mornings feeling ready to face the day  
**1 2 3 4 5**
- I am making plans for the future  
**1 2 3 4 5**
- I laughed at something I found funny in the last week  
**1 2 3 4 5**

If you scored between 6 and 15, now is the time to find out why your emotions and enjoyment of life seem to be flat-lining. If you scored between 15 and 20, you seem to be ticking along in the medium range, but could the dimmer switch be turned down on some areas of your life? If you scored between 20 and 30, you seem to be flourishing and making the most of your life.

## Why does anhedonia hit midlife women especially hard?

One of the main reasons is the hormonal shifts before and during menopause. As levels of estrogen drop away in our mid-forties and beyond, this has a knock-on effect on production of feel-good chemicals in the brain, like serotonin and dopamine. Oestrogen is also a buffer against the stress hormone cortisol, so this means we feel a lot more stressed, and less able to relax and really appreciate enjoyable moments.


Stress and burnout is another big one. When we are stressed we release the stress hormone cortisol. This puts us into a state of fight-flight-or-freeze and dampens the effects of feel-good chemicals like dopamine. Lack of sleep has also been found to interrupt the release of dopamine into the reward system.

And there is also diet. Modern diets that are high in sugar and preservatives can cause inflammation in the gut and kill off the microbes which help make feel-good chemicals like serotonin.

## How can we start to move away from feeling blah?

The best way to move away from 'blah' is to understand how pleasure is made in the brain. When you know that, you can do more of what makes you feel good and work out what might be standing in the way. There are lots of lifestyle tweaks you can make to improve the working of your brain's rewards system. These range from always having something in the diary to look forward to (to build dopamine) to eating an anti-inflammatory diet (lots more wholefoods to encourage the supply of serotonin).

We can also do something called 'behavioural activation'. The principle is that doing something you once enjoyed, no matter how small, is always better than doing nothing, even if you don't feel the good effects right away. So, if you used to enjoy painting before you fell into blah, make a date with yourself do a little bit regularly, say twice a week, until the good feelings start to flow again.

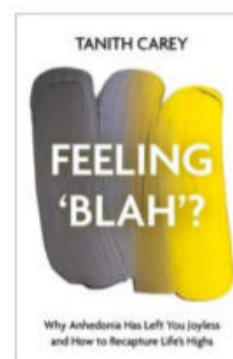
It may take a little time to get your reward circuits running at full capacity again – or to get your feel-good chemicals back in balance. However, by making lifestyle tweaks, changing your priorities and deliberately feeding your brain more positive inputs, those small changes will gradually add up. 

## How to find the best blah-beating activity for you

To find an activity that will help lift you out of blah, it helps to identify your 'spark'. Everyone has sparks. They are activities that give energy and joy, and which when we do them make us feel alive and as if we are drawing on our potential. A spark originates inside you. It hasn't been forced or imposed. It can be any skill, talent or interest.

The easiest way to identify your spark is to go back to the activities you were naturally drawn to as a child or teenager, and which you would have done anyway without adults getting involved. If it's not immediately obvious where your spark lies, have a think about the following questions:

- What was your favourite activity as child, which you did without being asked?
- What were your favourite subjects at school? And when you left, which ones did you want to know more about?
- What clubs did you join in your teen or college years, when you had free time?
- What were your favourite holidays as a child?
- Is there a theme among creators you follow on social media?



*Feeling 'Blah'? Why Anhedonia Has Left You Joyless and How to Recapture Life's Highs* by Tanith Carey (£16.99, Welbeck Balance)

# Changing track

How to make a midlife career change work for you.

**M**idlife is an opportunity to open a new chapter, take everything we've learnt, and reassess where our passions lie and where we'd like our future focus to be. With the retirement age set to rise to 67 in 2026, and many working way beyond that, our working lives span five decades and an average of 12 different

jobs. During which time, our interests and priorities inevitably change.

According to a study published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, adults in their forties and fifties are more likely to switch careers than their younger counterparts, due to a combination of personal and professional factors. These include a desire for greater job satisfaction, financial stability, or a sense of ►



personal fulfilment. It may be daunting, but with the right approach and mindset, it is possible to transition into a new career that aligns with these shifting interests, principles and goals.

So how do we identify these values and goals? Sarah Berry, managing director of Career Consultants (*careerconsultants.co.uk*) explains: 'As career consultants, we start with the "why". Why does the individual need to make a career change? Only by starting with the why will the individual be driven to make the change. This process involves asking questions such as: Is my current job draining my energy? Is it serving society? Is it helping me to feel healthy and uplifted? Is it impacting my relationships outside of work? By focusing on the "why" before the "how", the individual is more likely to make a successful career change that aligns with their values and goals.'

## Taking control

Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that 40% of the UK's part-time workforce is over the age of 50. And nearly half (46%) of the self-employed workforce in the UK is now over the age of 50.

This emphasis on flexibility is something psychotherapist Helen Smith (*helensmiththerapy.com*), 48, particularly appreciates. She made the jump from teaching to starting her own psychotherapy practice in her mid-forties. She explains: 'Teaching had changed, and I had less and less time to do it the way I really wanted to. It was incredibly demoralising, and I needed to leave. My personal life had also changed; I'd been through a divorce and needed to earn more to provide for myself. My children had left home, leaving a quiet space to work from home. I was also going through the perimenopause. I decided to set up my own private therapy practice. I'd already trained and worked as a therapist in a charitable agency, but teaching had taken over.'

'Being able to control your own environment makes a lot of difference, and having a job that is sustainable in terms of the second half of life is a weight off my shoulders.'

'I've not regretted my decision for a moment. I do miss my students, but I love my work and my finances are in a better state. I also have interesting plans for the future, which are in my control. I love working with trainee therapists and am contemplating working within a university, facilitating personal development groups alongside my private practice. I could not be happier.'

'My advice to anyone looking to change careers is to surround yourself with encouraging people on the "other side". People in the same stuck position as you may not be the most helpful. I would also suggest that, at some point, you will have to take steps without being certain of the outcome. The sooner you take those steps the easier it is.'



Photo: Emma Jackson

Helen Smith

## Transferable skills

Transferable skills are those you've developed in your previous roles and industries that are attractive to new roles and industries. These can include problem-solving, time management, communication, leadership and teamwork. Identify and highlight these transferable skills in your job search. You can demonstrate to potential opportunities that you have the skills and experience necessary to succeed in a new role.

Lucia Knight from career design consultancy Midlife Unstuck ([midlifeunstuck.com](http://midlifeunstuck.com)) goes further: 'Making a midlife career change is fraught with risk, and many are tempted to throw the baby out with the bath water. Getting clear on the uniqueness and specificity of your transferable skills is the foundation to long-term enjoyment and fulfilment at work – particularly in midlife.'

'When you know the specific activities that you do better than almost anyone you know (your superpowers), you possess the corner pieces of your personal happy work jigsaw, vastly reducing the risk of making the wrong decision when making midlife career changes. You also increase your potential to be highly paid for using talents that make you feel good. What's not to love?'


Gee Footitt, of St James's Place Financial Adviser Academy ([sjp.co.uk](http://sjp.co.uk)), explains: 'To identify your transferable skills, start by listing all the tasks and responsibilities you've had in your previous roles. Then, think about the skills you used to complete those tasks and responsibilities. For example, if you've been a customer service representative, you've likely developed strong communication, problem-solving and the ability to handle difficult situations. Midlife also brings with it wisdom, perspective, emotional intelligence, decision-making and judgement.'

Nicole Gunter decided to pivot her career with St. James's Place Financial Adviser Academy after a successful career running her own global freight forwarding business. She admits 'There were some raised eyebrows when people heard I'd made the change, but my network has helped me build up my business. My clients are people like me. I understand that so often the last people business owners take care of is themselves – I can recognise this and can help them to make a change. This gives me a purpose.'

## Highlight strengths

Gee continues: 'Create a list of achievements and successes in your past roles. Reflect on what you did well, what you enjoyed and where you excelled. These will give you a good indication of your skillset.'

'Once you've identified your transferable skills, highlight them in a CV and cover letter. Use language to demonstrate how your skills can be applied to new roles and industries. For example, how you've used them to achieve specific results in your past roles and how you plan to use them in your new role.'

'Keep in mind that a career change is not an overnight process, but finding one that aligns with your interests, values and goals achieved, by understanding your transferable skills, will be worth every effort. After all, as the old cliché goes, if you find a job you enjoy doing, you will never have to work a day in your life.' 

## Promotion



# Join Liz for an exclusive wellness break in Bologna



### SPECIAL GUEST

**‘I’m so looking forward to meeting readers in person, taking some well-deserved time to relax and treat ourselves, and to sharing so much of what I’ve learnt about having a better second half in such beautiful surroundings.’**

Escape the stresses of daily life and enjoy pure relaxation at an elegant 18th-century villa with glorious gardens and a luxury spa.

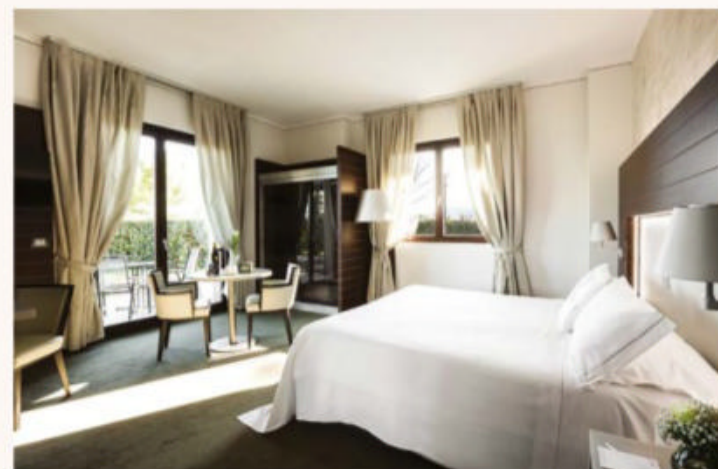
**I**n the tranquil hills outside Bologna, you’ll find the heavenly Palazzo di Varignana, an 18th-century palace among 30 hectares of ornamental gardens, water features and parks, with astonishing views across the rolling countryside beyond.

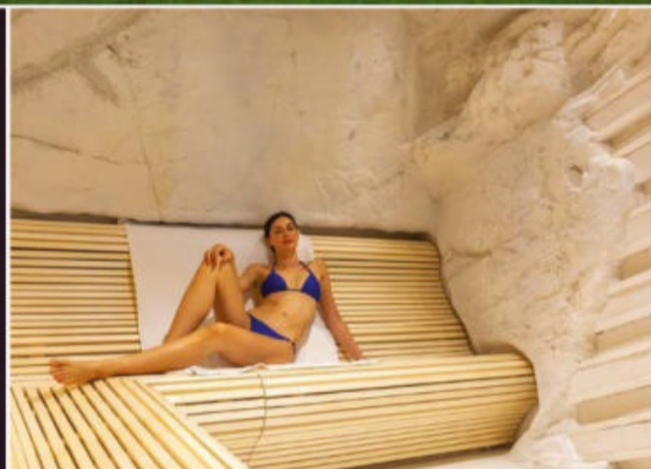
Join Liz Earle MBE for four peaceful days at this unique resort, where you can unwind and pamper yourself while enjoying the serenity of the Northern Italian hills. With five swimming pools, an exceptional spa and recently refurbished facilities, this is a true oasis of relaxation and tranquillity.

Liz will accompany you at the Palazzo for a very special dinner and cocktail reception, where she’ll give a talk about wellness, drawing on her decades of

experience in beauty, nutrition and wellbeing. She will also host a workshop and Q&A session, so you can ask her your questions about wellness and come away with tailored expert advice.

The Varsana Spa is the real star of the show at Palazzo di Varignana, and you’ll have daily access, plus a 10%





## Reasons to book

### Delicious Italian dining

There are three excellent restaurants at the hotel. All meals included in the retreat are overseen by resident health practitioner Dr Anna Maria Acquaviva, who will also lead a mindful lunch as part of the itinerary. Be prepared for a multi-sensory experience and a new appreciation of the food you consume.

### Meet Liz

You'll join Liz for an afternoon workshop, as well as an exclusive evening at Palazzo di Varignana for dinner and a cocktail reception, where she'll share her secrets for a better second half, drawing on decades of experience in the beauty and wellness industries.

### Exceptional spa

You'll have access each day to the Varsana Spa, which won the Best Spa in Italy award at the prestigious European Health & Spa Awards in 2020. Enjoy a 10% discount on any spa treatment\*\* from an extensive treatments menu and benefit from top-class facilities, including a hammam, Turkish bath and Finnish sauna.

## PRICE INCLUDES

- Three nights' accommodation on bed and breakfast
- Cocktail reception and gala dinner with Liz
- Workshop with Liz
- Mindful Lunch with Dr Anna Maria Acquaviva
- Daily access to the spa
- 10% discount for any spa treatments booked seven days in advance
- Group yoga class
- Guided tour of the ornamental gardens, part of the Grandi Giardini Italiani network
- Two dinners and one lunch
- Return transfers
- Flights (optional) at an additional cost from London Gatwick to Bologna

discount\*\* on any spa treatments included with your stay. This award-winning spa carefully blends ancient wellbeing rituals from Japan, Morocco and Rome with innovative 21st-century treatments. The facilities are extensive and include sensory showers, a bio-sauna, a Finnish sauna, Turkish bath, ice waterfall, sound pool, mud cave and hammam.

There are three excellent restaurants at the hotel, including an informal poolside restaurant, an elegant fine-dining restaurant, and a traditional trattoria. All three serve carefully considered dishes, many made with produce from the hotel's own grounds and with its own high-quality extra virgin olive oil.

\*From price is per person, based on two people sharing a room, subject to availability. Price and itinerary correct at time of print but may be subject to change. Single supplement £345. Deposit £25%. Local charges such as tourist tax may apply. \*\*Subject to availability, only applies for treatments booked at least 7 days in advance. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, expert(s) may be substituted, and any expert-led events may be subject to change. Expert(s) will not join you for your full trip duration unless otherwise stated. Travel insurance is not included but required for most of our overseas trips, and should be taken out at time of booking. Images used may not reflect your actual tour experience. This holiday may be sold through other selected brands. Tour is operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wellbeing Escapes Limited.



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# Understanding anger

Therapist James Earl on how to keep a lid on fury.



**There's a secret about anger. If you've ever been told 'it's good to express your anger', or 'you mustn't bottle anger up', or 'repressing anger can make you physically ill' – it may be time to rethink it. None of these statements are actually true.**

To really understand anger, try googling 'basic human emotions'. You will probably come up with a list like this: sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust.

But anger doesn't really belong on that list, because anger is not really a feeling at all. At least, it's not a primary human emotion like the others.

Instead, it is helpful to think of anger as a way we manage our feelings. If you're disappointed, frustrated or anxious, anger can relieve us by blocking those negative feelings. When we are angry, there is no mental space for those difficult, underlying emotions. This is why 'losing it' usually feels like momentary relief.

Soothing like this is an early part of everyone's behaviour as a child. When you see a toddler having a tantrum, you're watching the way they are dealing with frustration, disappointment or

some other negative emotion – and adults are no different. A tantrum is the way a child expresses 'it's not fair', and at the same time blocks their underlying feelings of disappointment or sadness.

While we have all probably envied the three-year-old that can scream and shout when they're frustrated, if we try to employ the same strategy as adults, we usually know it looks and feels quite childish. Anger is an early self-soothing strategy.

Anger works, because it gives voice to the part of us that feels injustice, and makes us feel powerful for a moment, which is particularly effective if the underlying feeling includes a sense of helplessness. But since it blocks the sad, unhappy or disappointed part of us, it actually takes us away from our real feelings.

Shortly after we calm down, we often feel remorse – even a sense of inauthenticity. This is because, although we used anger to soothe, we are now thrown back into the original feelings we were having. We may feel remorse about what we said or did while we were angry, but it often goes deeper than that – we realise somewhat sheepishly that anger wasn't really what we were feeling before.

There are many ways to manage our feelings. Some people reach for a drink to calm themselves, but it wouldn't make any sense if they said, 'This glass of wine IS my feelings.' Rather, having

a drink is the way they've chosen to settle their feelings.

In the same way, if we reach for anger, we shouldn't really say, 'This anger IS my feelings.' It's more accurate to say, 'This is the way I'm dealing with

my feelings.'

Looking at anger as a self-soothing technique, rather than as an emotion, leads to some interesting ideas. If anger isn't a primary feeling, you can't really bottle it up – though of course

***'Look at  
anger as a  
self-soothing  
technique  
rather than  
as an  
emotion'***





you can bottle up sadness, grief, disappointment and so on.

And although we talk about someone being an ‘angry person’, we are really just describing their behaviour. There are no angry people, just people who use anger a lot. It’s not them, just a script they learnt earlier in life.

Soothing ourselves in this way is always a choice. There are usually better alternatives, such as going for walk, putting our feet up and reading a good book, listening to music, meditating or meeting up with friends. Alternatively, we could, if we are self-aware enough, look at our underlying feelings; anger’s hidden roots.


Unfortunately, anger is a major problem, not just for individuals

but in relationships, too. When your partner gets angry, it is NEVER OK to blame you for it. Remember, it is their choice to be angry, even if they say you provoked it (or if they use my favourite pet-hate phrase, ‘You triggered me!’).

A partner’s behaviour may lead to you feeling frustrated, disappointed or sad, but they never ‘make’ you angry. That’s your choice to deal with the feelings you’re having.

If you are the one that gets angry, ask yourself – what am I really feeling?

And if it’s your partner who is the angry one, why not encourage them to read this article?

Good luck – understanding is the key to change. 

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

### Top five anger mantras

- 1 Anger is not a feeling.
- 2 Anger is a self-soothing technique.
- 3 Anger is a script learnt early in life.
- 4 Anger is always a choice.
- 5 ‘You made me angry’ is never true.\*

*\* And bear in mind it would never work as a defence in court.*



Scan this QR code to watch James’ award-winning two-minute animation on anger





GIVING  
BACK

# The WAY out of grief

The loss of a spouse is a devastating experience, no matter what age you are. However, being widowed at a young age brings a unique set of challenges. Charity WAY Widowed and Young seeks to support those coping with bereavement before the age of 51.

Losing a partner is a lonely and isolating experience, and one that requires a great deal of strength to overcome. It can feel like a betrayal of all the plans and dreams you shared together. There may be a sense of disbelief, anger and despair, and it can take some time to work through these emotions.

WAY Widowed and Young is the only national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died. The charity supports young, widowed people as they adjust to life after the death of their partner. Founded 26 years ago, WAY now has more than 4,600 members across the UK, and organises weekends away and meet-ups, offering an alternative social life for those who are grieving.

Orla Blackburn joined WAY after the death of her husband Andy in 2018, when he was 47. She now hosts online yoga sessions ([orlablackburn.com](http://orlablackburn.com)) for other members.

She says: 'Andy and I had been together for 24 years. And then he was no longer here. Suddenly, I was doing everything alone, plus dealing with deep grief and our son's grief. My brain altered, my day-to-day life changed, and how I looked at the world and myself changed. I also walked away from my career, which had been a big part of my identity.

'I could barely cope, apart from the essentials. I was acting on autopilot and unable to parent at all. I was constantly aware I was not helping my son with his grief, but was powerless to how I was feeling and behaving.

'In short, Andy's death altered every part of my being. Seeing him suffer and die over the short space of 11 weeks had a huge impact on everything. ►



I was very lost with what to do with myself, especially after the funeral. Everyone else returned to their lives, but all I could do was sit and stare out at our garden. Aimless. For months.

‘I knew I had to somehow honour the life Andy didn’t get to live. It wasn’t done intentionally at first, it was a feeling. But discovering yoga felt like I was at home. It felt good, nurturing, calming, safe – giving me everything I was missing.

‘During the early classes I became aware of many things about my body – its lack of balance, how unyielding it was, how tense and terrified it was, how unsafe it felt. In the last ten minutes of class, when meditation happened, I could finally feel. That’s when the tears would come. It was the only time my body felt supported and safe enough to let it out. After realising how yoga was helping and

changing me, with lots of trepidation, I invested in myself and did my training in 2020.


‘I joined WAY just under a year after Andy’s death and was immediately surrounded by people who knew what I was going through. It was a relief to be heard and understood in an unfiltered way. There is something very powerful about being in a community of others who are living and breathing the same(ish) experience. You can discuss your worries, anger and disappointments without fear of upsetting or alienating the people in your everyday life. It’s also where those who have more years of being widowed under their belt can give hope to those who are new to their loss.

‘WAY put many things online because of the lockdowns – members volunteered their time

and put various ways to connect online, and I realised there was something I could offer too. Initially, I simply did an hour of yoga moves with fellow WAY members, but as I have become more confident and educated in somatic healing and how the body/mind connection works, I honed and shaped what I offer to be as beneficial to the grieving body and mind as possible.

‘People who might not feel ready to face others, or just don’t have the energy or motivation, can try something without leaving the house. No fancy equipment is needed, you can do it in your PJs. Regardless of age, fitness or size, you will benefit.

‘This yoga is about softening, releasing trauma, connecting to your body, and loosening all the tension and grief stored in the body and mind. We can be holding our shoulders tight and hunched up to our ears without even realising it. Or holding our breath, our faces contorted with tension. In the grief sessions, I invite everyone to find that connection to the body, to their being, to their ‘home’. The body is with us until we die, so we need to treat it with love and consideration, and tune in to what it is telling us.

‘It is so sad that it took the death of my husband for me to wake up and realise how precious life is, and how it can be lived and experienced so differently with a different approach and understanding.’ 

**Find out more about WAY Widowed and Young at [widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://widowedandyoung.org.uk)**



## Coping with bereavement

Whether you are going through it yourself, or seeking to support a friend or loved one who has lost a spouse, here are Orla’s three pieces of advice.

**1** Slow down, remove all expectations of what you feel you should or shouldn’t be doing/feeling/saying. Get through each breath, each moment, and don’t look further ahead than the day in front of you. Allow yourself to be fully immersed in your grief. Something awful has happened, you can’t avoid it. You will be OK.

**2** Take every bit of support that is offered. If you are established in your neighbourhood and the neighbours are offering help, take it. You probably won’t have a clue what to suggest whenever they say ‘If you need anything...’ – but each time you do think of something you cannot bear the idea of doing, write it down. Then the next person who offers, give them something off your list (cutting the grass, taking out the bins, inviting your children for a playdate, shopping for you, etc).

**3** Community and connection – this is the biggest, most helpful thing you can do for yourself. That community can be in person or online. Get yourself onto WAY. It’s an amazing first step that costs just £25 per year. It is beyond worth that £25. Simply reading the conversations online is beneficial if you are not ready to join in any chat. That’s what I did for some time before I felt brave enough to use my ‘voice’ online. There is so much that is available within the charity itself.

# BOOK CLUB

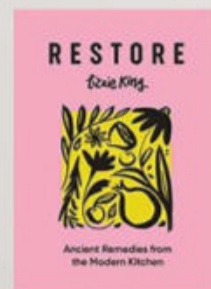
Join us on Instagram using the hashtag #LEWbookclub and share what you're reading.

The best reads of the season – from hotly anticipated fiction to life hacks and kitchen inspiration from around the world.



## NON-FICTION

Put self-care first with homemade remedies and chicken-keeping!



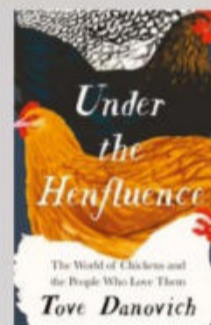
### **Restore: Ancient Remedies from the Modern Kitchen**

by Lizzie King (Welbeck)

Nutritional health coach

Lizzie King shares 100

fuss-free, clever lotion and potion recipes for you and your home – from tonics that ease hay fever and balms for anxiety, syrups for avoiding the seasonal lurgies or coping with a sick bug, to fizzing bath bombs, edible face masks, lickable kitchen sprays and more. All the recipes use easy-to-source ingredients, and are good for our health, household budget and planet. **OUT 25 MAY**

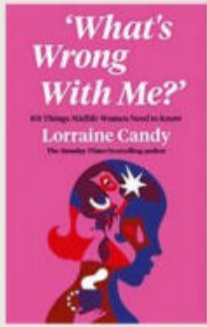


### **Under the Henfluence**

by Tove Danovich (William Collins)

Did you know that more than 1,000,000 households keep

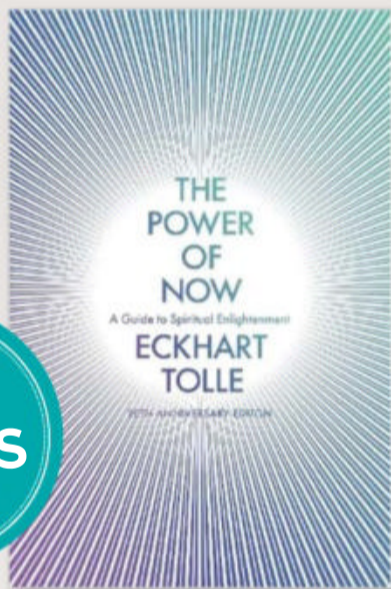
chickens in the UK? Indeed, the chicken has now overtaken the hamster, guinea pig and budgie in popularity. While practical chicken-keeping books abound, *Under the Henfluence* is a charming mix of chicken-keeping memoir and animal welfare reporting, interspersed with fascinating forays into their history, role in modern agriculture, intelligence and much more. At the heart of the book is the bond the author forms with her hens, Peggy, Joan and Betty, and why chicken-keeping is the ultimate form of self-care. **OUT NOW**



## What's Wrong With Me? 101 Things Midlife Women Need to Know

by Lorraine Candy  
(4th Estate)

Author and award-winning columnist (and *Liz Earle Wellbeing Show* guest) Lorraine Candy tackles the whole gamut of midlife – from empty nest, career reinvention, sex, marriage, brain fog and burnout to perimenopause and menopause. Embrace this liberating and transformational stage of life, with advice from experts, celebrities and personal stories. This laugh-out-loud book will chime with anyone whose midlife rage has caught them by surprise. **OUT 25 MAY**



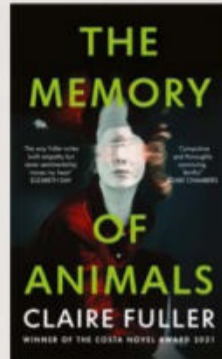
## The Power of Now

by Eckhart Tolle (Yellow Kite)

I was given the 20th-anniversary edition of this life-changing book as a present, and what a great gift. It seems appropriate to share here now. In the words of the bestselling author himself: 'You are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold. That is how important you are!' A book that can transform your way of everyday thinking into active joy.

## FICTION

Escape the day-to-day with page-turning new fiction.



## The Memory of Animals

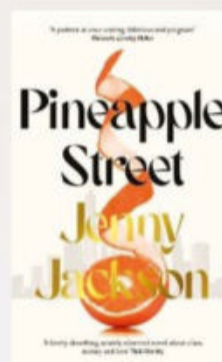
by Claire Fuller (Penguin)

The award-winning author of *Unsettled Ground* returns with a creeping tale of isolation and the dangerous allure of memory. Neffy, a volunteer in a vaccine trial during a deadly pandemic, is introduced to a powerful new drug that can help her revisit moments from her past. When things start to get worse outside the unit, where she and the other volunteers are being held, what was a controlled trial becomes a fight for survival. She ends up caught between the horrors of surviving the present and reliving difficult moments of her past. **OUT NOW**

## Yellowface

by Rebecca F Kuang (HarperCollins)

When Asian American author Athena dies in a freak accident, a white writer, June, steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own, to great acclaim. But when it looks like June's been found out, and her stolen success is hanging in the balance, she discovers exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves. Sharp-edged and darkly funny, *Yellowface* is a timely look at cancel culture and cultural appropriation, and the lengths people will go to if they think they can get away with it. **OUT 23 MAY**



## Pineapple Street

by Jenny Jackson (Cornerstone)

Charting the path of three women from a high-profile Brooklyn family – one born with money, one who married into it, and one who wants to give it all away – *Pineapple Street* is a deliciously moreish exploration of class, money, ambition and... tennis. This ringside view of the upper echelons of New York, and their lives of unimaginable wealth and privilege, sparkles with pithy wit. Expect to see it on a sun lounger near you this summer. **OUT NOW**



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# BOOK CLUB

## COOKBOOKS

Shake up your repertoire, with kitchen inspiration from around the world.



### **A Good Appetite**

by Jenny Chandler  
(National Trust)

Jenny is passionate about inspiring others to source, prepare and eat great food, and *A Good Appetite* is focused on seasonal, planet-friendly cooking. Alongside over 50 recipes, Jenny has included brilliant bite-sized guides to everything from eating with the seasons, batch cooking and the best ways to use your freezer. By avoiding food waste and stretching expensive ingredients, there's a payback for our pockets, too.

**OUT NOW**



### **The Pepperpot Diaries**

by Andi Oliver  
(Dorling Kindersley)

TV chef Andi Oliver's debut cookbook is brimming with the delicious Caribbean flavours that she is renowned for celebrating, incorporating her travels in Antigua to create a unique, exuberant culinary experience.

Andi shows us how to create simple-yet-sensational dishes that will bring the flavours of Caribbean cooking to our tables.

The 100 recipes span quick stews and light curries to big-pot celebration dishes.

**OUT NOW**



### **Comfort & Joy**

by Ravinder Bhogal  
(Bloomsbury)

A fresh take on vegetarian and vegan cooking; not geared towards health or denial, but nourishing all the senses with bountiful tastes and ingredients. *Comfort & Joy* is packed with fortifying curries and stews, irresistibly aromatic fried snacks, and rich, indulgent puddings.

For writer, cook and Jikoni restaurateur Ravinder Bhogal, food should be made and shared with abundance in mind, and this jumps out of every page.

**OUT 25 MAY**

[uk.bookshop.org/shop/lizearlewellbeing](https://uk.bookshop.org/shop/lizearlewellbeing)

Find all of these books and more through our carefully curated Liz Earle Wellbeing [bookshop.org](https://uk.bookshop.org) page. This great initiative sources books through your local independent bookseller, offering support to a vital part of your local high street.



# My Better Second Half with Tess Daly

‘Cooking nutritional meals for those you care about is an act of love,’ says much-loved TV presenter, Tess Daly. Here, she shares the ingredients for a good life.

## On ageing well

Staying active is an absolute priority. Fitness has become a vital part of my life, because if I let that fall by the wayside, I really notice a difference to how I feel. That doesn't necessarily mean going to the gym and working out every single day, as that's never going to be practical. I just try to fit in any activity that gets the heart rate up – from briskly walking the dog to doing some aerobic exercise at home. I especially like getting my skipping rope out – try it! You might find, like me, you love the feeling of the endorphins kicking in.

Flexibility is also key, since stiff limbs age us physically and can be detrimental to overall health. I find five minutes each day to stretch and keep supple. And, of course, I try to prioritise a good night's sleep, which we all physically and emotionally benefit from. It's a chance for our bodies and minds to rest and replenish.

## On eating well

I'm a passionate advocate of eating well and the effect food can have on our health – it's the best medicine. Ginger is a go-to ingredient I try to include in most of my meals (and drink daily as home-brewed tea) for its anti-inflammatory and anti-viral properties. Garlic is also one of nature's medicinal wonders that I work into as many recipes as I can at home. Inflammation has been linked to many diseases, so I try and keep it at bay as much as possible with the foods I eat.

While writing my book, I also learnt more about how a decline in gut health has been linked to anxiety, a depleted immune system and fatigue – and we all know that we don't feel ourselves if we're bloated and uncomfortable. The gut is also where our happy hormones like serotonin are produced – so if our gut isn't happy, neither are we! I try to include lots of gut-friendly ingredients in my meals, even if it's just a sprinkling of seeds and



ground cinnamon onto my porridge or yoghurt for breakfast.

Above all, I find that cooking nutritional meals for those you care about is an act of love; you're giving the gift of health through something you have created in your own kitchen.

## On looking well

If we look after ourselves from the inside out, starting with the food we eat, then our bodies will look all the better for it. Exercise helps keep muscles toned and improves posture. Getting the heart rate up also gives us an endorphin glow,

which means we feel happier and smile more; and when we smile we always look more beautiful. I say let's all smile more if we can. The odds are stacked against us a lot of the time, but smiling makes me feel better in an instant. I do it when I'm driving – if someone cuts me up, I make myself smile at them through the frustration and often they smile back despite themselves. They can't help it!


I also try to look after myself by sticking to a skincare routine which involves cleansing, toning and always, always moisturising. Dehydrated skin never looks good; it's ageing. I often sleep in a good moisturising face mask for an extra plumping boost during the colder months. And the same goes for my hair; every week or so I'll use a deep-conditioning treatment on the ends or leave on overnight to help my hair recover from all the drying on shoots and in the studio.

### On living well

Living well means enjoying positive relationships with family and wonderful friends. It's so important to make time for both, as all too often now we find ourselves overwhelmed with responsibilities. I take real care to ring-fence time spent with loved ones because mentally it's such a boost; you feel so much better for having a good dose of company and yes, maybe a cocktail or two if it's a catch up with girlfriends. For me it also means cuddles with the dogs and their unconditional love. Walks outside in nature and looking up at the sky, instead of down at a screen.

Mindfulness is something I prioritise for at least five minutes a day. Even if it's just sitting on my

own quietly with a cup of tea. This feels like a mini-vacation from the to-do list of the day.

Travel also feels like a luxury. Not only is it something to look forward to and plan for, but the memories we make last forever. And at the end of our lives, let's not forget that memories are all we have. 

## Tess's wellbeing essentials

### Resistance band

I take this wherever I go. It rolls up tiny, fits in my bag conveniently and is perfect for stretching out limbs. Sometimes I use it just before bed to stretch out my legs and calf muscles. You can pick one up for a few quid on Amazon. Probably the cheapest but most effective fitness tool I use.



### Wellwoman vitamin supplements

I first discovered Vitabiotics through their Pregnacare range when pregnant with my first child, Phoebe, who is now 18. They kept me healthy and brought me a healthy child.

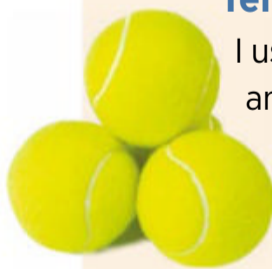
Vitabiotics heard me talk about this in an interview, got in touch and we've been working together ever since. They are simply the best in their field. It's not always possible or practical to get the vitamins and minerals we need from our diet, so supplements are a no-brainer for me.

### Clarins Beauty Flash Balm

I have been using this for as long as I can remember and there's nothing that comes close to matching it for sheer versatility. It works wonderfully as a deep moisturising treatment or to give you a glow under makeup. Sometimes I'll even sleep in it overnight to give my skin a moisture boost.



### Tennis balls



I use these for on-the-go reflexology. Take a tennis ball and roll it under the balls of your feet when seated.

Feet are full of nerve endings so it feels like a total treat. It's great for relaxing the body at the end of the day – you can even do it in front of the TV.



**4 Steps: To a Happier, Healthier You** by Tess Daly is out now (£18.99, Bantam)



# THE Liz Earle

## Wellbeing Show

# TUNE IN

Podcasts to inform and inspire a better second half.



### Women in parliament with Stella Creasy MP

‘We’ve got to stop talking about the women, because the problem isn’t women. I bang my head on the desk when Jacinda Ardern or Nicola Sturgeon stands down, and suddenly you get a plethora of articles: “Can women cope? Can they have it all?” Nobody’s saying that about men.’



### LISTEN UP

Download *The Liz Earle Wellbeing Show* from Apple Podcasts, Spotify or any other podcast provider. Or simply scan this QR code with a smartphone camera.





## Menopause and the vagina with Dr Shirin Makhani

‘We’re all happy to talk about hot flushes and even anxiety and palpitations. But the vaginal symptoms of menopause are really under-reported. At least 25% of women report that they have issues with their vulvas and vaginas, but I think it’s something healthcare professionals need to ask more about when women seek help for their menopausal symptoms.’



## Selfish romance with Michelle Elman

‘The problem is, women have been trained to be easygoing, low maintenance and as amenable as possible. This sets a precedent for our relationships, where we’re more easygoing, frankly, than most women are and we’re not understanding that our needs are important.’

## FIRM FAVOURITES

Exhausted our archives? Here’s our pick of the pod-verse.

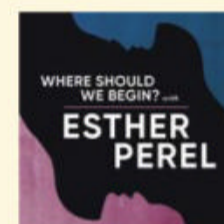


### Style DNA

Amanda Wakeley is joined by celebrity guests (including our very own Liz

Earle) to uncover their unique Style DNA. It makes for fascinating interviews that will encourage you to consider the most treasured pieces in your own wardrobe.

### Where Should We Begin?



Ever wondered what goes on behind the closed doors of a therapist’s office? Now you can listen in. Relationship therapist Esther Perel counsels anonymised couples as they reveal the most intimate, personal and complicated details of the conflicts that have brought them to her door.



### Dr Giles Yeo Chews the Fat

Giles Yeo is on a mission to stop simplifying

conversations about food and health into bitesize (and often misleading) nuggets of information, like calories or BMI. In this myth-busting podcast he chews the fat with fellow foodies, scientists and doctors, to ask whether our genes play a role in weight loss and gain, whether calories are a useful metric and whether it’s time our relationship with food changed altogether.

# LIZLOVES

by **Liz Earle**  
*Wellbeing*

From fabulous hair to dress of the season, Liz shares her top-to-toe must-haves – all with an exclusive LIZLOVES discount.

To discover all of our exclusive discounts, head to [lizearlewellbeing.com/liz-loves](https://lizearlewellbeing.com/liz-loves)



FREE  
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## Aspiga Emma cheetah dress

The Emma midi dress is an all-time favourite – and this season it has been launched in vibrant cheetah print. Made from sustainable, lightweight EcoVero viscose, it's relaxed, super-flattering, and can be dressed up or down.

[aspiga.com](https://aspiga.com)

## Michael van Clarke 3 More Inches Volumising Shampoo

My secret weapon for great hair. Formulated with cashmere proteins almost identical to human hair molecules, this shampoo plumps tresses from within, giving lasting body and maximum swish.

[vanclarke.com](https://vanclarke.com)



15%  
OFF



## Manifesto Beauty Vitamin Gummies

For healthy hair, luminous skin and stronger nails, I love these planet-friendly gummies. They contain astaxanthin, biotin, inulin and açai berry, and best of all, the packaging is plastic-free.

[manifesto-nutrition.com](https://manifesto-nutrition.com)

15% OFF  
FIRST  
ORDER



# Live well for less with **LIZLOVES**



Looking to bag a beauty bargain? Or to snag supplements to support healthy ageing? Head to the LIZLOVES marketplace to shop a carefully curated selection of brands – all tried, trusted and genuinely loved by Liz. The best part? Our team has secured exclusive discounts for *Liz Earle Wellbeing* readers. Scan the QR code to browse the collection.





**WIN**

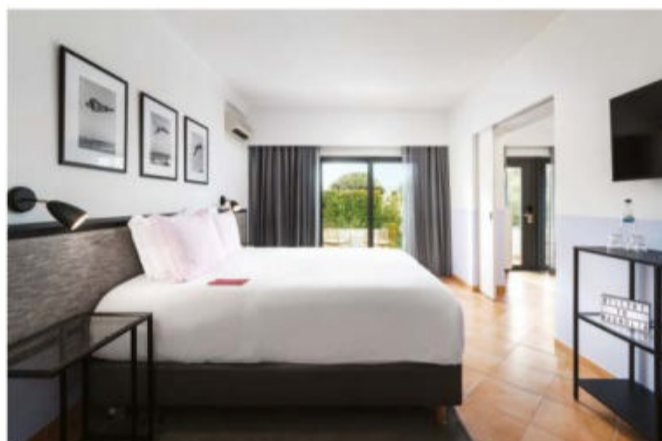
## A stay at Quinta do Lago in the Algarve

*Worth  
£1,420!*



The Algarve coast in Portugal is home to stunning golden beaches, balmy temperatures, picturesque towns and world-class golf courses. And, nestled in the Ria Formosa Nature Reserve, the resort of Quinta do Lago offers the very best of what the region has to offer.





One lucky winner and guest will spend three nights at the Quinta do Lago resort, experiencing what makes it so truly special.

Accommodation is at The Magnolia Hotel. This retro-styled, pastel-hued motel brings a taste of Palm Springs to the Algarve, and its fabulous facilities include a heated outdoor pool and gym, plus a laid-back poolside bar and restaurant.

While all meals could easily be taken at The Magnolia Hotel, take advantage of half board in different Quinta do Lago restaurants. Across the resort, a host of unique eating experiences await, relaxed or formal, from Casa do Lago, a seafood restaurant with stunning lakeside views, to popular steakhouse Bovino and relaxed café Pure.

The prize also includes daily access to the highly acclaimed Campus sports complex for the duration of the stay. The Campus is a state-of-the-art performance and innovation

hub enjoyed by world-class athletes, visiting teams and enthusiastic amateurs of all ages and abilities. Take your sporting ambitions to the next level with its high-performance gym, tennis and padel courts, swimming pool, cycling, group classes and personal training, plus recovery suites and sports rehabilitation.

The jewels in the resort's crown, however, have to be the three golf courses – all of which are among Europe's best. Improve your skills on the green with either two free rounds of golf, or learn the tools and techniques used by professionals with a lesson at the golf academy.

After sampling all the activities on offer, be sure to take things down a gear and soak up the sun on the unmissable pine-fringed sandy beach, or amble around the Ria Formosa Nature Reserve. Here, you can follow the trails which take you past salt marshes and lagoons, all teeming with birdlife and unique flora.

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

***'Soak up the sun on the unmissable pine-fringed sandy beach'***

### PRIZE INCLUDES...

- 3 nights for 2 people at The Magnolia Hotel (worth €540).
- Breakfast and dinner at different QDL restaurants (worth more than €300).
- Daily access to the Campus (worth €294).
- 1 round of golf or golf lesson for 2 people (worth €286).



To enter, and for full terms and conditions, head to [lizearlewellbeing.com/winalgarve](http://lizearlewellbeing.com/winalgarve)

\*T&Cs: Transfers not included.  
 Prize to be taken before 1 May 2024.

## In truth

# Coming of age

Choosing the image and cover lines for this magazine is usually an easy and enjoyable task. My team and I gather to take some pretty pictures, we select the nicest-looking ones and come up with some positive words to inspire or encourage our readership.

This issue was different. I confess to being hesitant, reluctant even, about putting my age right out there in (such large!) lettering on the cover. Truth be told, it was my team's idea. I was not so enthusiastic. Why? Well, quite simply, I don't identify as being 60.


I've heard the arguments about 60 being the new 50 - or 40 even - and that 'age is just a number' and all that, which is true. But there's a world of difference between celebrating a milestone birthday with a handful of friends - and going public in such a loud and proud way.

The truth is, I don't feel so bold about it at all. I guess it's similar to the way I felt when I wrote one of the first books on the menopause, *The Good Menopause Guide*, eight years ago. Back then, menopause was a word spoken in hushed tones and I wasn't at all sure I wanted to be linked to a moniker more associated with physical and mental decrepitude. I didn't identify with that either, having been saved in my early fifties by HRT, high-fat foods, HIIT, magnesium, cold showers and many other midlife health hacks. But as time passed, the word menopause has become less loaded. I'm pleased it's now everyday parlance

for a life stage, and not necessarily a negative one. I hope I've helped many see menopause not only as a time to be talked about, but embraced.

Maybe the same will be true about ageing also. I look forward to the day when it doesn't bother me to say I'm in my sixties. Right now, I'm feeling my way forward to a time when I'm not shy to 'admit' my age. Perhaps it's because I'm single, and the first thing a dating site asks for is your age. Should I tell the truth - or do I lie? My chronological age is 60, but my biological age is 39, according to fitness trackers and age-marker tests. Which is the real me? I feel somewhere in between. I'm aware of having fewer years yet to live ahead of me than

are behind me (or perhaps not, if the bio-hackers are to be believed). But after a bit of discussion with my Wellbeing team, have come round to the conclusion that ageing, done well, is to be celebrated. Hence our pink balloons and all that jazz on the cover.

Ultimately, ageing is a gift, sadly denied to many, so I am determined to do it justice. I shall step into my 'second half' in pink marabou, a broad smile and high heels - and hope to inspire my sisterhood to do the same. 

Liz x












For all of Liz's latest news and advice on looking well and feeling great, follow Liz and the Wellbeing Team on:

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

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