



WEIGHT LOSS SPECIAL

Tips for intermittent fasting • New fat-loss laser

TOP Santé

HEALTH & BEAUTY

EATING TO STAY SLIM

Why keto is the way to go!

6 SIMPLE MOVES FOR TONED SHAPELY THIGHS

HORMONAL HELP
GOODBYE TO STRESS BELLY!
Self-care lifestyle tweaks to stay trim

TESS DALY
'Wellness is not a luxury, it's a necessity'



YOUR BEST HAIR YET!

Discover 16 pages of products for all hair types in the Top Santé Haircare Awards 2023!



HEALTHY + NUTRITIOUS SALADS

Tantalise your tastebuds with new recipes from Leon



TV personality and dancing star Janette Manrara, reveals why she has teamed up with AWARD-WINNING health and beauty brand New Nordic®, whose Collagen Shot has become part of her daily routine. We caught up with Janette to explore the secrets of her skincare routine.

JANETTE'S SECRET to beauty from within

WHAT WAS IT THAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO NEW NORDIC?

"It's all about beauty starting from within. The whole ethos sits well with me because I am all about working on yourself from the inside out and, it's all natural. I want to put into my body things that are good and make me feel good. So, the combination of the two really felt like a perfect fit for me to join the family."

WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL THOUGHTS WHEN TRYING THE PRODUCTS?

"When I first tried Collagen Shot, I was really impressed because it has a nice taste to it, and I just think it went down quite smoothly- nothing acidic or crazy about it. Now I kind of crave it in the morning when I don't have it, I feel like 'oh I missed it!' So, I really do enjoy the taste."



"I love Collagen Shot. I'm all about working on yourself from the inside out, we call it BEAUTY FROM WITHIN."

- Janette Manrara

WHY DO YOU LOVE NEW NORDIC'S COLLAGEN SHOT?

"I love Collagen Shot because it's so easy to take. It's so quick. I get up in the morning (I already take other vitamins anyway) so when I take those, I just take the quick shot and I feel like I'm also looking after my skin as well as my body all in one dose- first thing in the morning."

WHEN DO YOU TAKE YOUR COLLAGEN SHOT?

"I like to take my Collagen Shot first thing in the morning. I have quite the morning ritual with my skin and vitamins, and a big glass of water!"

YOUR DAILY BEAUTY SHOT

It couldn't be easier to make collagen part of your daily beauty routine. New Nordic Collagen Shot provides a high dose of hydrolysed maritime collagen from sustainable fishing, along with extracts of acerola, vitamin C and biotin. Vitamin C contributes to normal formation of collagen, which helps to improve the skin's

elasticity and counteracts the visibility of wrinkles, while biotin contributes to the maintenance of normal skin. Designed to fit effortlessly into your daily routine, Collagen Shot is packed in a practical sachet, ready to drink. Take it at home or on the go.



For exceptional results combine with New Nordic collagen range in a complete Beauty in & Out™ routine. A quality that works in harmony with your body. Results may vary. Always read and follow instructions prior to use.

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WELCOME!

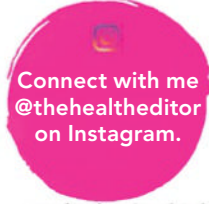
Summer is in full swing! At least it is as I write this; the sun has been beating down where I live – although when this issue lands in the shops/on your doorstep things may have changed, as you never can predict the British weather! That said, it's still the time to get outdoors more often and be active whether at home or abroad. I've been making the most of the heat to test out sporty swimwear for *Women's Fitness* magazine (I'm editing that too until the end of 2023), and here in *Top Santé*, we've got a round-up of wild swimming retreats to tempt you. The longer evenings also make it ideal for balmy summer strolls, and our walking columnist Joanna Hall has some great tips on how to improve your technique so you get the most out of every step (page 66). And, while I know it's no longer popular or appropriate to talk about getting a "beach body" – all bodies are beach bodies – some of us still feel a little less confident putting our legs on show in summer shorts, no matter what size, so Joey Bull is here to help with easy at-home moves to tone and sculpt your thighs (page 62). I'll be fitting them into my day to break up the hours spent at a desk! We've also got a focus on weight loss: Gabriela Peacock gives us the lowdown on intermittent fasting (page 42), Alice Dogruyol goes on retreat to revamp her eating habits (page 48), and I test out the latest laser therapy that makes fat cells function better (page 56). Pauline Cox also reminds us why sorting out your blood sugar is so crucial at midlife (page 90).

What's more, it's our 2023 Haircare Awards issue! Find all the winners and highly commended products for almost every type of hair, starting on page 71. Lastly, celebrity guest, Tess Daly, shares why self-care is non-negotiable for her, and how keeping physically fit helps her mental wellbeing. She also opens up about her busy home and work life, and why she's grateful for where she's at. I do hope you enjoy the issue.

Katy x

Editor-in-Chief

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



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IMAGE OF KATY: GEORGINA LITTLE PHOTOGRAPHY.



Read how Tess Daly dislikes the gym but always feels good afterwards! Page 14.

With it being the hair awards issue, I share my thoughts on going grey. Page 98.

THE TOP SANTÉ MANIFESTO

We believe every woman has the ability to maximise her health and beauty at any age, regardless of health history. With a balanced diet, effective exercise and a positive mindset, you can stay younger for longer, inside and out. We'll bring you the latest information on wellbeing, fitness, food and beauty, empowering you to make informed choices now and for your future health. What's gone before can't be undone or redone, so let's leave it in the past and focus on what can be changed today! We're here to help you, one small step at a time.

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IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.



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Missed an issue? You can find previous issues of your favourite health magazine at shop.kelsey.co.uk/TSBACK where you can buy individual copies both in print and digitally.



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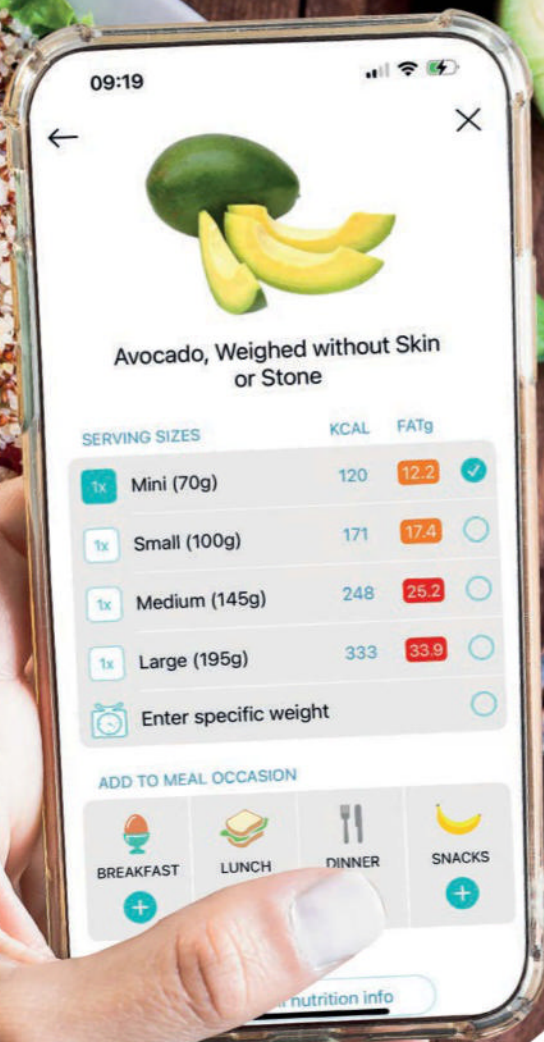
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UK foods

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barcodes



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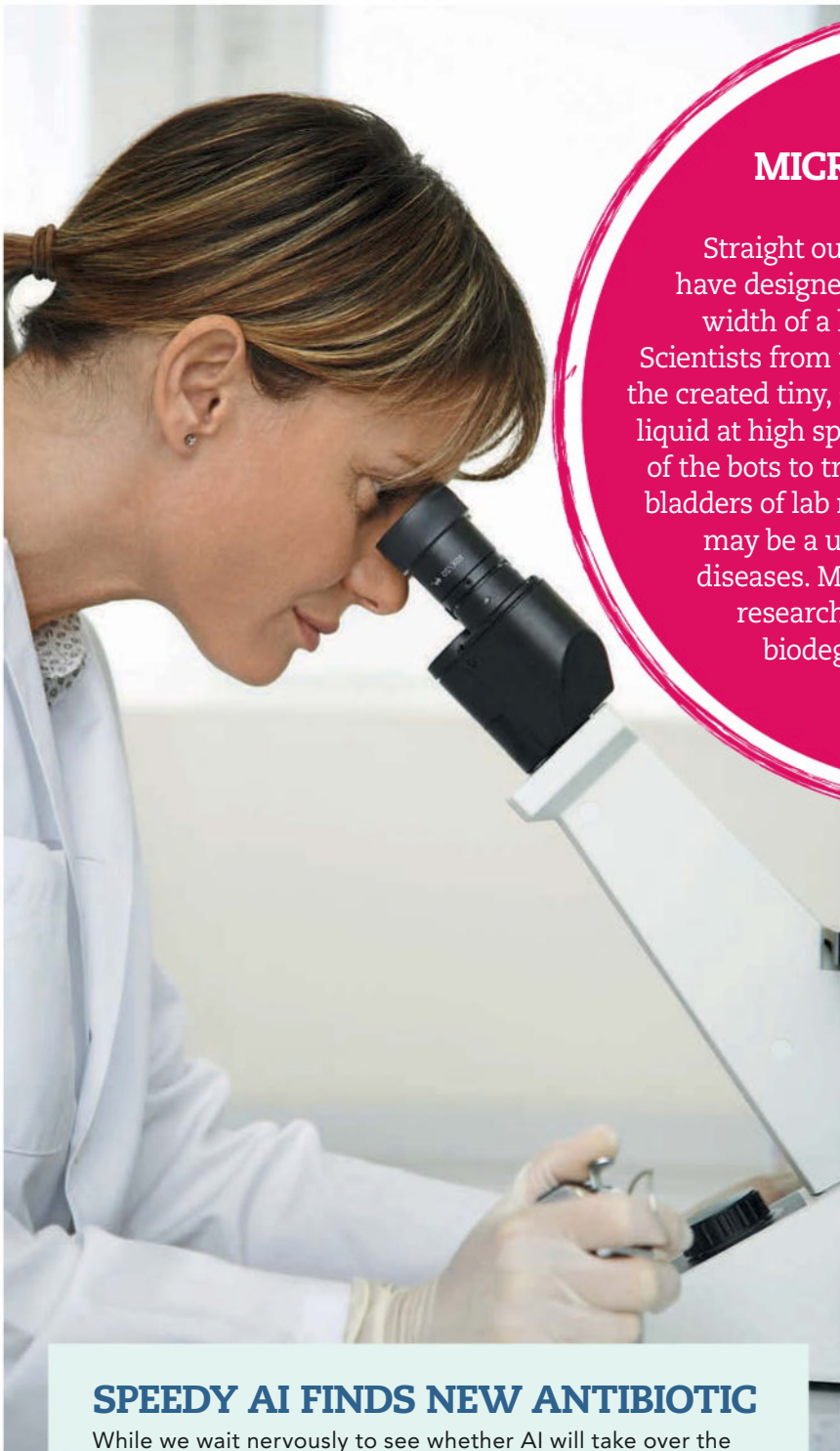
TOP HEALTH

New studies, books, apps and more to help you stay well in mind and body.

MULTIVITAMIN MEMORY BOOSTER

Ever wanted to turn back your body clock? Well, your memory, at least, can be three years younger by taking a multivitamin. More than 3,500 adults were given either a daily multivitamin supplement or a placebo for three years by Columbia University researchers. At the end of each year, participants were assessed for hippocampus memory function – a brain area affected by ageing. Memory improved for those on the multivitamin by the end of year one, compared to the placebo group. Researchers estimated the improvement was equivalent to about three years of age-related memory decline. So, while it's always preferable to get nutrients from fresh, whole food, multivitamins may be a simple, inexpensive way to slow down memory decline in older adults.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK.

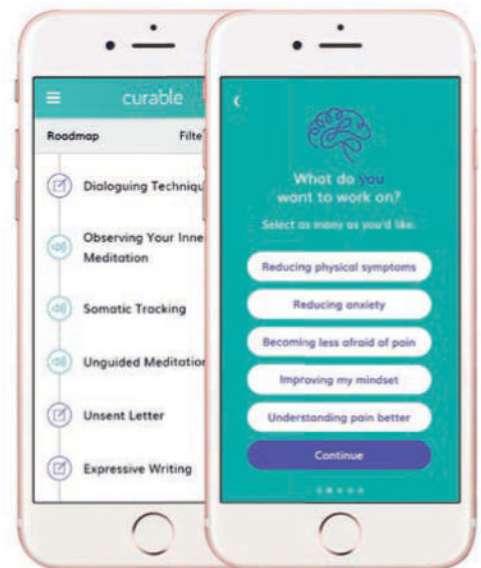


MEDICAL MICROBOTS TO FIGHT DISEASE

Straight out of science fiction, engineers have designed microrobots smaller than the width of a human hair to treat illnesses. Scientists from the University of Colorado Boulder created the tiny, self-propelled bots that zip through liquid at high speeds. Researchers then used fleets of the bots to transport steroid medication to the bladders of lab mice. Results suggest microrobots may be a useful tool for treating bladder diseases. More refinement is needed, and researchers want to make the bots biodegradable so they dissolve in the body.

APPY AND YOU KNOW IT

If you have chronic pain, such as migraine, sciatica or joint pain, **Curable** (£4.80 per month, curablehealth.com) can help restore your quality of life. Using neuroscience research and mind-body tools, you'll learn science-backed techniques for reducing pain symptoms and calming your nervous system. These include somatic tracking, graded motor imagery, cognitive behavioural therapy, guided meditations and pain-reduction visualisations.



SPEEDY AI FINDS NEW ANTIBIOTIC

While we wait nervously to see whether AI will take over the world, rendering us all redundant, right now it's proving rather useful. Using an artificial intelligence algorithm, researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology identified a new antibiotic that kills *Acinetobacter baumannii*, a drug-resistant bacterium that lurks in hospitals, leading to pneumonia, meningitis and other serious infections. AI analysis took less than two hours to whittle thousands of compounds down to just a couple of hundred potentially useful ones. Then, scientists performed lab tests to identify the best antibacterial compound, now named abaucin. A great example of machine learning dramatically speeding up life-saving drug discovery.



GO MEAT FREE FOR HEART HEALTH

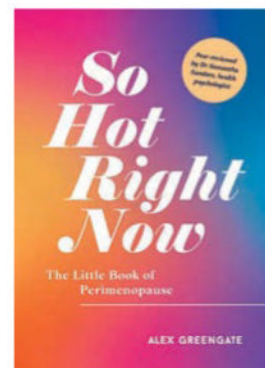
Eating a plant-based diet cuts your cardiovascular disease risk by a fifth, say some scientists. Vegetarian and vegan diets reduce cholesterol and fat in your blood, reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke, according to the *European Heart Journal*. Scientists examined 30 studies, with more than 2,000 participants, for levels of good and bad cholesterol, a fat-carrying protein and other factors. Researchers found vegans and vegetarians had an average reduction in cholesterol levels of seven per cent, with a 10 per cent reduction in bad cholesterol and a 14 per cent reduction in fat-carrying protein levels, compared to omnivores. Extrapolating the figures, eating meat-free for 15 years means reducing your heart disease risk by a fifth. Pass the vegetables!



TOP OF THE PODS

Unravel the motivations behind how you think, feel and behave with psychology lecturer Claudia Hammond, on **All in the Mind** (bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxx9). She delves into the mental health, neuroscience and psychology of subjects such as kindness, managing worry, feeling less lonely and focusing on positivity. It's a long-running show so you have more than 200 online episodes to binge listen to!

NEW READ



***So Hot Right Now: The Little Book of Perimenopause*, by Alex Greengate (£7.99, Vie Books).** Breaking the stigma about the changes happening to your body and brain during the years leading up to menopause, this book helps you face a new stage of life with confidence. There's guidance on recognising and managing perimenopause mental, physical and emotional symptoms, including hot flashes, night sweats and mood swings. Plus, find the best treatments and medications for you, including how to approach perimenopause holistically.



KATY CURATES...

Editor-in-Chief Katy Sunnassee shares her latest favourite wellbeing finds. Connect with her at [instagram.com/thehealtheditor](https://www.instagram.com/thehealtheditor).



Sundae Body Whipped Shower Foams (£12.99 each, [sundaebody.co.uk](https://www.sundaebody.co.uk)). Summer is the time for juicy fruits – and that can apply to your body care too! You'll find an array of gorgeous fragrances in this line-up from Sundae Body, including Orange Crush, Cherry on Top and Juicy Pear. All are vegan and cruelty free.

Freya Active Swimwear (from £23, [freyalingerie.com](https://www.freyalingerie.com)). I love the new Ibiza Waves bikini and Komodo Bay Bikini from Freya Active. The cobalt and aqua designs transport me to tropical climes plus you can expect a flattering fit and the signature Freya bra support.



Caudalie Vinosun Ocean Protect Lightweight Cream SPF50+ (£19 for 40ml, [caudalie.com](https://www.caudalie.com)). Caudalie is one of my go-to brands for sunscreen. This reef-safe SPF contains clean ingredients and is super lightweight, not greasy, and suitable for the most sensitive summer skin. Caudalie also recycles the same amount of plastic it uses – bonus!



Therabody SmartGoggles (£174, therabody.com). Find it hard to switch off at the end of a busy day? Why not try these first-of-a-kind relaxation goggles designed to optimise sleep? They combine a biometric heart rate sensor with vibration, heat and massage to help release tension and let your worries melt away. My husband, who is a terrible sleeper, says he feels a lot more relaxed after using them.



See more of my favourite beauty and wellness finds at instagram.com/thehealtheditor

Vionic Jamie Platform Lug Sandal (£130, vionicshoes.co.uk). When it comes to footwear, the words “stylish” and “orthotic” might not naturally go together... until now. Each pair of Vionic shoes combines a podiatrist-designed orthotic insole with a flexible, cushioned outsole, so they feel super-comfortable. They look great, too. I love these 90s-inspired platform sandals, which are perfect for everyday wear.



WORDS: KATY SUNNASSEE. IMAGES: VARIOUS BRANDS.



BRAINS PURE CBD®+Ashwagandha (£50 for 28 capsules, hollandandbarrett.com). Want to know the number one health concern in the UK? Sleep. If you’re wrestling with fatigue and anxiety, you might want to consider CBD. These new capsules blend CBD with adaptogenic herb ashwagandha, which has been used for centuries in Ayurvedic medicine as a natural stress reliever. Pop a couple a few hours before bed to help you sleep.

Yana Active 3.0 T-Shirt (£35, yanaactive.co.uk). If you’re looking for luxury activewear built to perform, look no further than this oversized, relaxed tee from Yana Active. It’s made from 100 per cent cotton and is great for sleeping in too!





MY LIFE IN HEALTH

‘WELLNESS IS NOT A LUXURY, IT’S A NECESSITY’

Strictly Come Dancing host and mum of two Tess Daly, 54, opens up about motherhood, marriage and mindfulness, and reveals why she hopes her new book will help women prioritise themselves.

All the women in my life are secret superheroes. We’re juggling the balls, keeping them in the air and trying our very best. And it means we have to fight for those windows of time – every woman I know has a long list of responsibilities and we tend to put ourselves on the backburner. We’re also our own worst critics and we can sabotage our happiness with that “stinking thinking”. We should all cut ourselves some slack and remind ourselves of what we achieve on a daily basis.

I love being a mum; it’s the most important thing I do. My eldest, Phoebe, is off to university in September and I’m in complete denial about it. I know the empty nest syndrome is going to be crazy. The centre of my universe has been my kids, so the thought of them ever leaving me feels... wild. I know it’s the future, but I really haven’t come to come to terms with it just yet. You look back at photos on your phone and they’re blowing out eight candles on the cake and before you know it,

they’re looking you in the eye as young adults with opinions! But it’s the natural progression of life. I didn’t want to miss out on any aspect of that parenting journey because I’m aware of just how quickly it goes.

The closest I’ve come to burnout was when I went back to present *Strictly Come Dancing* just six weeks after having Phoebe in 2004. I was lucky I had a job to go back to because the industry I work in is incredibly fickle.

'I genuinely feel as if I'm nurturing my mental health by looking after myself physically.'

But breastfeeding and live television are not the easiest things to manage and on top of that, I was so sleep deprived. The sleep deprivation was intense and debilitating and although I managed to do my job and be a mother to my baby, I was exhausted. Everything was difficult and ready to swing me off kilter. I was operating at such a high level of energy, giving everything to my baby and nothing was being replenished.

Wellness is not a luxury, it's a necessity. Taking five minutes to stretch before going to bed or breathe mindfully for a few moments to stop the racing thoughts about the "to do" list, is not only valuable for ourselves but for everybody else in our lives. If we keep ourselves topped up with the good stuff, then we're less likely to burn out.

Every morning I set my alarm so I'm always up before anyone else. It can be a struggle, but I don't like starting the day on the backfoot, I'd much rather begin as I mean to go on – calmly, mindfully and in control – and getting up early helps me do this. It gives me a few moments of quiet time to have a little stretch and give my body some TLC before the rest of the house wakes. After that, it's all guns blazing and we're off!

I've come to learn how important it is to get enough sleep. Adequate

rest is the ultimate goal and it's something I'm constantly trying to achieve. I'm fascinated by how we can aid our sleep. What benefits it? What hinders it? So much of it is to do with diet – what we eat last thing at night can really affect sleep, so I avoid having acidic foods like tomatoes in the evenings or eating too late at night because my digestion will have me tossing and turning and impact on how deeply I fall asleep.

Let's be honest: who truly loves the gym? But once you've been, you never regret it and that's how I challenge myself when I think I haven't got the time. Because exercising makes me feel as if I can achieve more and I feel more capable and ready to seize the day. The initial effort to get there is never easy but while I can't say I love it – and I definitely don't enjoy sweating – I do love the feeling I have afterwards.

Bad gut health can be linked to depression and anxiety. I genuinely feel as though I'm nurturing my mental health by looking after myself physically. That's both through the foods I eat or the movement I take during my day to counteract the sedentary parts of my life. Even if I spend five minutes doing a few exercises in the house – skipping, lunges or planks – that makes me feel better mentally and that's how I look after myself.







'I'm grateful for the life I've lived and for the place I'm at right now.'

I love chocolate and the occasional cake – don't we all? And I can't deprive myself because that's just not sustainable in my mind and it wouldn't make me happy. Moderation is key for me. Have a little bit of what you fancy, just don't overload on it.

I've always eaten that way – little and often. I've got one of those metabolisms that needs to be constantly grazing and never far from the fridge. That has always worked for me – I don't want to feel sluggish by having giant portions. Having said that, they're not exactly supermodel portions either!

Vernon [Kay, Tess's Radio 2 presenter husband] and I celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary in September.

I haven't got a clue what he's planning but I've been dropping a few hints about lovely weekends away. I'm hoping he's been listening! He did very well on our 10th when he organised a trip to the South of France to renew our vows and arranged for all our family to be there too. I had no idea that was going to happen. It was unforgettable and so that will be quite difficult to top because he really pulled out all the stops.

When I met Vern, I'd been travelling around pretty much incessantly for 12 years as a model. I guess meeting him felt like coming home. And then I did physically come home, moving back from New York month by month, bag by bag, until I closed my life down there and settled here. And that was it. But it's funny, isn't it? You travel the world and then meet someone who was never that far away in the first place.

Strictly Come Dancing has been a part of my life for 19 years now! And it feels wonderful to be part of

something of which the nation is so fond. To be at the heart of a collective vibe that is so wonderfully celebratory and joyful and warm is a gift. There's so much goodwill towards it and whenever I meet people, they want to talk about it, and the fact they've invested their time in the show makes you realise this is something that's very special.

I'm learning new stuff all the time.

I'm excited about growing my swimwear business Naia Beach that was started by women, for women. It feels I'm on a journey of discovery that's constantly evolving and long may that continue because being creative is a connection to life.

Writing my book *4 Steps to a Healthier, Happier You* is another dream realised. It took a long time to come to fruition but it's lovely to be able to share something about which I'm genuinely passionate. It's been a labour of love and it comes from the heart. Wellbeing is a part of my daily life and I wanted to make it accessible to everyone, not as a preachy, elitist self-help manual, but through the inexpensive lifestyle hacks that collectively can make you feel better, boost your self-esteem and lift the mood.

I dedicated the book to "anyone who needs to take a moment for themselves" and hope it helps people reclaim some of the time which is often snatched away by the busyness of life. Those moments are where the joy is, right? And we deserve that.

My life's journey hasn't always been easy. And I know everybody else's life can seem perfect and glossy, especially when you look at them on Instagram. But I'm grateful for the life I've lived and for the place I'm at right now because it's brought a sense of calm and wisdom and I don't take anything for granted.



4 Steps to a Healthier, Happier You by Tess Daly (£18.99, Bantam), is out now.

Also find out more about her beachwear range at naiabeach.com.



Healthy HOME

Brighten up your living space this summer with the latest home and garden essentials.



CONSCIOUS CLEANING

Best known for its eco-friendly nappies and wipes, Kit & Kin (co-founded by Emma Bunton) has branched out into the world of refillable, plant-based cleaning products (from £3.99, kitandkin.com). With options available for every room and surface in your home, the 100 per cent naturally derived, vegan-friendly and cruelty-free products contain no harsh chemicals, making them safer for you and the environment. What's more, every product sold helps protect acres of precious rainforest.

TAKE A SEAT

Get kitted out for your beach picnics, festival weekends and camping trips with **The Well Heeled Hippy Store Low Safari Chairs** (from £89, thewellheeledhippystore.com).

Complete with a handy carry bag – and weighing just 2.6kg and folding to 4cm when flat – these portable chairs are the perfect companions for any up-coming adventures. Available in taupe, cream, khaki or navy, the lightweight, durable chairs are made with water-repellent Oxford cloth canvas and beech wood.



BRIGHTEN UP YOUR WALLS

The Pandora Collection from The Stone & Ceramic Warehouse

(from £240 per m², sacw.co.uk) features bright and bold mosaics made from recycled glass.

Perfect for adding a splash of colour to your walls, these sustainably made tiles are available in a variety of shapes and designs. Either stick with one shade, or mix-and-match for a bold feature wall!



WORDS: LILY SMITH. IMAGES: VARIOUS BRANDS

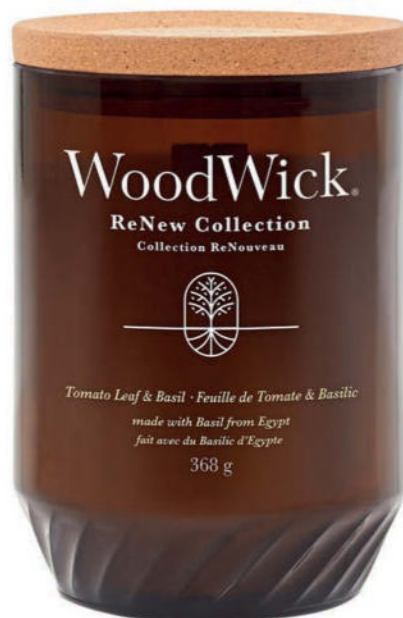
FIRE UP THE BBQ

Looking for a hassle-free way to enjoy healthier BBQs? The **Cuckooland Lotus Grill BBQ** (from £129, cuckooland.com) is a smokeless, portable grill that uses 90 per cent less charcoal than most BBQs. The adjustable internal fan means it creates rapid heat while the exterior remains cool, so you can start cooking just 3-4 minutes after lighting. There's also a handy drip tray to catch fat and oil, along with a pizza stone and grill hood (available separately) for pizza nights! It's even dishwasher safe, meaning no post-BBQ scrubbing required! It comes in four sizes and a selection of bright colours.



Clean-burning candles

The new **WoodWick ReNew Collection** (from £26.99, woodwick.co.uk) is made from dye-free soy and coconut wax plus traceable essential oils. The candles are housed in jars made from 55 per cent post-consumer recycled glass, along with sustainably sourced cork lids. We love the Tomato Leaf & Basil one!



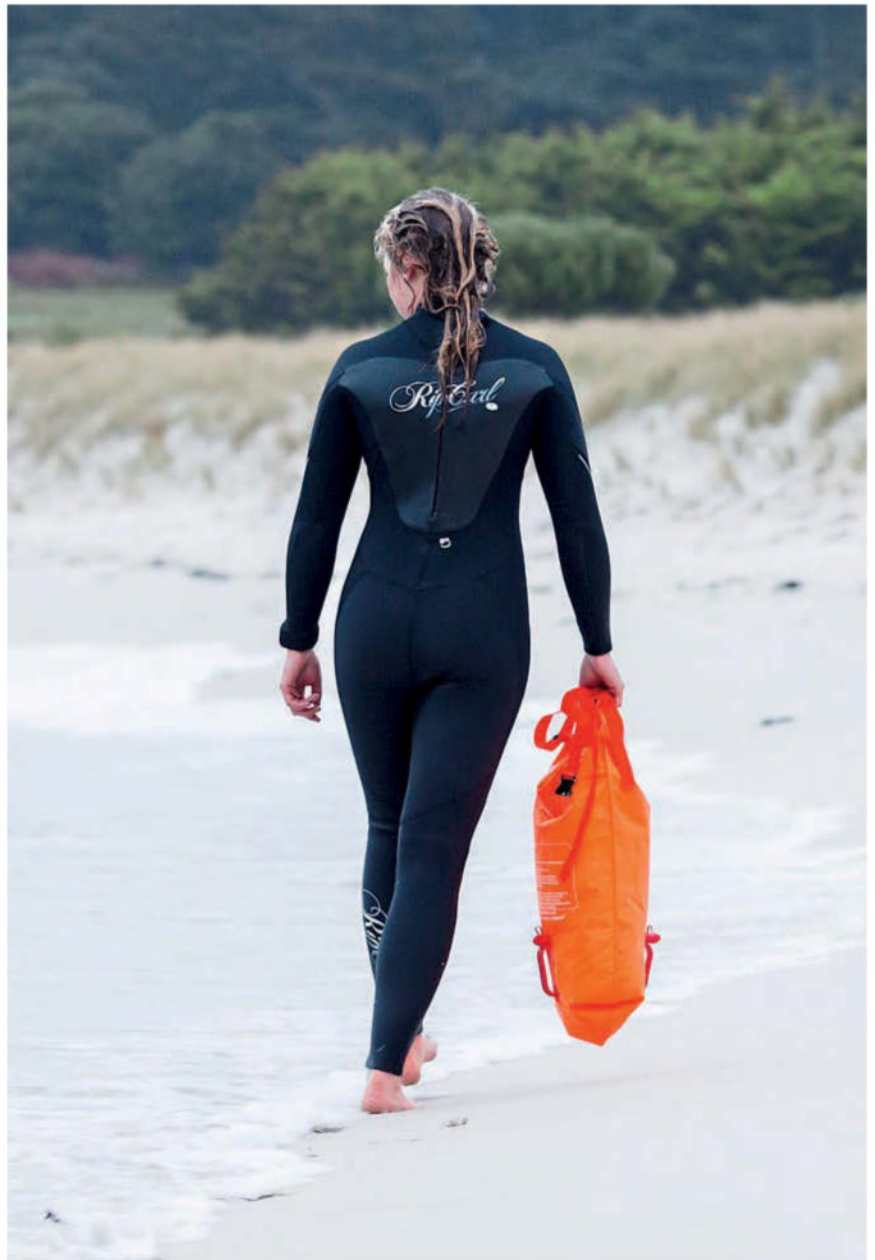
FILTERED WATER, ON TAP!

Wish you could drink filtered water every day? **Abode Swich** (from £213, abodedesigns.co.uk) is an easy-to-install filter that can be added to any mixer tap, so you can enjoy crystal-clear, chemical-free, filtered water at the flip of a switch. There's even an option for hard-water areas, to prevent limescale build-up. The sleek and discreet control switch is available in a range of colours and finishes to suit all homes.



SWIM ON THE WILD SIDE

Don your wetsuit and dive in to our pick of the best wild swimming and cold-water immersion retreats.



Build your swimming confidence

WHAT: Introduction to Cold Water Swimming Retreat by Triscape

WHERE: Tresco, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall

WHEN: 16-21 October 2023

Price: From £1,637 per person (based on two sharing)

WEBSITE: tresco.co.uk

Located on the stunning island of Tresco, this five-night retreat is perfect for cold-water swimming

beginners who are looking to build their confidence and skills in the water while soaking up the relaxing island atmosphere. Led by Olympian Keri-anne Payne, founder of Triscape (triscapeme.com), the expert coaching begins in a safe indoor pool, including dedicated one-to-one lessons, before venturing out to an array of spots along Tresco's beautiful coastline.

Your retreat includes self-catering accommodation in the pretty Sea

Garden Cottage, three-course group dinners on the first and last nights, bike hire throughout your stay, plus full access to the Tresco Island Spa and famous Abbey Garden.

If you're already a skilled wild swimmer, check out the Tresco Adventure Swim Retreat (11-16 October), which includes a range of more challenging swims, ideal for those with a high level of open-water swimming experience.



Embrace the cold

WHAT: Immersive Cold-Water Retreat by Travel Matters

WHERE: Loch Tay, Scotland

WHEN: 23-27 September 2023

PRICE: From £1,100 per person (based on three sharing)

WEBSITE: travelmatters.co.uk

Taking place in the beautiful Edwardian Lodge on the banks of Loch Tay, this four-night retreat offers the perfect opportunity to learn all about the benefits of cold-water immersion in a safe, practical and engaging way. Co-led by Guinness World Record holder for Apnea and Free Diver, Amber Fillary, each morning starts with a bracing swim and guided cold-water immersion session in Loch Tay. Ideal for complete beginners, each dip focuses on how to stay safe in cold



water, while also reaping the numerous health benefits.

After your invigorating swim, you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast before taking part in mindfulness experiences, physical wellbeing exercises and relaxation sessions. Then, after lunch, the afternoon schedule is completely

free for you to use at your leisure. Previous guests have explored the surrounding picturesque countryside, ancient woodlands, cascading burns and the nearby mythical Waterfalls of Archan, all of which is over looked by the brooding Ben Lawers Mountain Range.

Find your flow

WHAT: Dive In To Yoga Wild Swimming & Yoga Retreat by The Zest Life

WHERE: Isle of Anglesey, Wales

WHEN: Multiple dates throughout July, August and September

PRICE: From £598 for a three-night retreat (based on two sharing)

WEBSITE: thezestlife.co.uk

Based at Plas Cadnant, a stylish and secluded country house on the Isle of Anglesey, The Zest Life offers a huge range of wellness retreats throughout the year. The Dive Into Yoga retreat seamlessly blends yoga, meditation and wild swimming, to help you reconnect both with nature and yourself. With a choice of three, four or five-night packages available, you can expect to enjoy expertly guided wild swimming sessions in a range of breath-taking locations,



along with restorative coastal walks along the Welsh coastline and plenty of morning and evening yoga classes.

During your stay, you'll also be treated to post-swim herbal teas and cake, healthy picnic lunches and

nourishing evening meals. Plus, there will be plenty of free time to explore the surrounding gardens, relax and recharge with a massage, or curl up by the log fires and enjoy the soothing candles and incense in the main house.





Swim under waterfalls

WHAT: Wild Swimming & Waterfalls package at Armathwaite Hall Hotel

WHERE: Lake District, Cumbria

WHEN: Ongoing offer

PRICE: Package from £90 per person.

Package plus overnight stay, breakfast, lunch and dinner from £320 per room (based on two sharing).

WEBSITE: armathwaite-hall.com

Set amongst the majestic falls of the northern Lake District, this half-day package promises to deliver an unforgettable and exhilarating experience in the great outdoors. Under the careful guidance of the hotel's wild swimming coach Ali Phillips, you will spend the morning immersing yourself in natural water stops, including the silky smooth Bassenthwaite Lake, the hidden Gin Pool, a natural infinity pool with beautiful views and a string of spectacular waterfalls in Buttermere.



The package includes hire of a wetsuit and neoprene swimming socks, along with hot drinks, sweet treats and plenty of pictures.

Fancy extending your visit? Book yourself in for a luxurious stay at

Armathwaite Hall Hotel, complete with a range of spa treatments and facilities, fine dining in the four on-site eateries and plush rooms with picturesque views of Lake Bassenthwaite and Skiddaw mountain.

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Prepare your body for travel this summer with these high-quality vitamin C supplements.



All-natural herbal formula

Hello Wellness Immune in Tune (£29.99 for 60, hello-wellness.co.uk). Powered by plants, this all-natural and vegan-friendly supplement contains eight different herbal ingredients including rosehip, elderberry and rosemary, which combine to offer great antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties, along with high levels of vitamin C to keep you well.

ACCORDING TO OUR reader survey, 73 per cent of you took supplements over the past year, of which 47 per cent were to help support your immune systems.

And with summer the time to go travelling, this could be when you become exposed to a greater variety of germs due to a new location and, often, being around lots of people. This means your immune system is working overtime to keep you on top form.

If you're jetting off on your summer break, it's therefore a good idea to pack a high-quality vitamin C supplement. 'Vitamin C can support your immune system in multiple ways,' says nutritionist Dominique Ludwig (dominiqueludwig.com). 'For example, it encourages the production of white blood cells, such as neutrophils, which protect your body from infection.'

It's not only germs you'll be exposed to when you travel – you can also be faced with a whole truckload of pollutants. Luckily, this powerhouse vitamin can help. 'Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, playing an important role in protecting your body from free radicals – unstable molecules that damage cells. Vitamin C mops them up and renders them safe,' says Dominique.

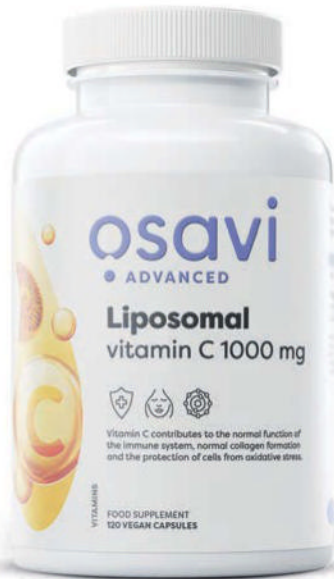
Tasty and refreshing

Vitamin Well Hydrate (£23.99 for 12, amazon.co.uk). Newly launched in the UK after leading the vitamin market in Sweden for 15 years, these low-calorie drinks offer a tasty way to take your daily vitamins. The deliciously cooling Hydrate blend tastes like rhubarb and strawberry and contains vitamins C and B12, along with biotin, niacin and zinc. Perfect for hot summer days!



'The benefits of vitamin C go far beyond bolstering the immune system: did you know, it can also work wonders for your skin and joints, thanks to its role in collagen production?'

WORDS: LILY SMITH. IMAGES: VARIOUS BRANDS.



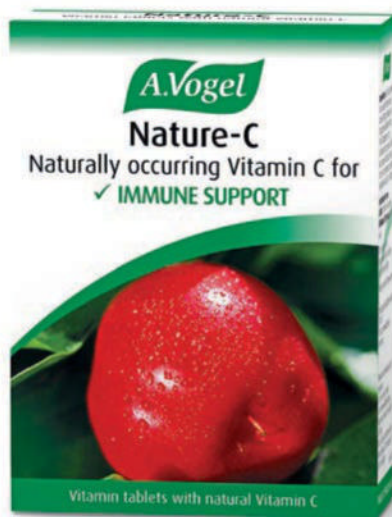
Easy on the stomach

Osavi Liposomal Vitamin C (£25 for 120, powerbody.co.uk). Providing 1,000mg of vitamin C, these vegan-friendly capsules use dry form liposomal technology to ensure a high level of bioavailability, while being gentle on the stomach. The all-natural formula is also free from unnecessary fillers and additives.



Add to drinks or yoghurt

Igennus Liposomal Vitamin C & Zinc (£24.99 for 450ml, igennus.com). Using liposomal technology to improve absorption, this liquid supplement provides 1,000mg of vitamin C, alongside zinc, copper and selenium. With a smoothie-like texture and delicious citrus vanilla taste, you can easily mix it into drinks, add to yoghurt or take it straight from a spoon.



Powered by fruits

A.Vogel Nature-C (£9.99 for 36 tablets, avogel.co.uk). Utilising the naturally high levels of vitamin C found in a variety of different fruits, these chewable tablets contain the powdered dried juice of acerola cherry, passion fruit, sea buckthorn, prickly gooseberry, blackcurrant and lemon, to provide 100mg of naturally occurring and bioavailable vitamin C.



Super-fast absorption

Altrient C (£39.99, abundanceandhealth.co.uk). With 1,000mg of vitamin C per sachet, this clever formula encapsulates the all-important nutrient in a microscopic phospholipid bubble, protecting it from the destructive elements of the digestive system and ensuring delivery to your cells within minutes – equivalent to having a vitamin injection!

'SWIMMING WITH HORSES

healed my heart'

After her world was rocked by news of her husband's affair, writer Alison James travelled to an Indonesian island to try a unique form of equine therapy to help her heal.

A CHILDHOOD DONKEY ride on a seaside beach; the odd clumsy attempt at pony trekking; an occasional day at the races... I'd never had much to do with animals of the equine kind. They scared me to be honest – all flying hooves, huge teeth, flaring nostrils and unpredictability. I'd certainly never connected horses with any kind of healing power but then what did I know? I'd never expected to find myself after 30-plus years of seemingly happy marriage, staring into an abyss no longer knowing what my future held.

In 2019, I discovered that my husband and

the father of our three grown-up kids had been having an affair for more than a year. As infidelity goes, it was pretty standard fare, I guess: his lover was younger, fitter, more exotic than me. But there was an added twist. A sting in the spousal tail. My husband's lover was another man. "Yeah, I'm gay!" was my husband's frankly flippant explanation. "I think I've been gay since I was 12 years old. I hadn't acted on it before. I just didn't feel ready." To say I was shocked was the ultimate understatement. My whole world suddenly collapsed. My life was like a demolished building, and my once much-loved husband had pressed the detonator.



WORDS: ALISON JAMES. IMAGES (THIS PAGE) JOE KELLY. REST OF IMAGES: TANIA ARAUJO AND ALISON JAMES.



The Indonesian island of Sumba is home to 22 wild horses, which visitors get to ride both on the beach and in the sea!

IN NEED OF A REBOOT

Fast forward three-and-a-half very difficult years and the beginning of 2023 saw me attempting to seriously move on. I wanted to put the past behind and look towards the future – a future I knew I was going to have to rebuild. I also needed to rediscover my identity after decades of being a wife and mum and putting my own desires and needs at the very bottom of the list. I'd had some therapy and, although it had helped, I'd found it to be a long, drawn-out process. I needed a stark reboot – a kind of caring and nurturing short, sharp, shock treatment, if there was such a thing. And this is where the horses came in...

A friend told me about a new week-long equine therapy retreat taking place on the remote Indonesian island of Sumba. The

retreat was the brainchild of professor Andreas Liefoghe, a chartered psychologist and psychotherapist of many years standing, who was also an equine expert. He had founded Operation Centaur in London in 2005 after witnessing how well soldiers with severe PTSD responded to horses. Now, 18 years on, he had launched 'Retreat and Conquer', a holistic five-day retreat during which horses would play a central role.

'When we connect with a horse, we don't just connect with an incredible animal – we also connect with a disavowed part of ourselves,' prof Andreas was quoted as saying. 'In traditional therapy, this can take a very long time. Horses, however, do in therapy what they have always done for us: help us get there faster.'

Alison on her "horse buddy" Bindi.



‘Bindi was a reflection of who I wanted to be, who I could be. She was confidant and wouldn’t be cowed. Nobody puts Bindi in a corner!’

ARRIVING IN PARADISE

Having read from former participants that just five days of equine therapy had achieved more than several years of weekly talking therapy and that there was no requirement to be an experienced rider, I was sold. This sounded like just what I needed. It was time to treat myself and concentrate wholly on me. A once-in-a-lifetime trip that would push me out of my current, highly uncomfortable comfort zone and hopefully enable me to start seeing the world again in glorious, positive technicolour.

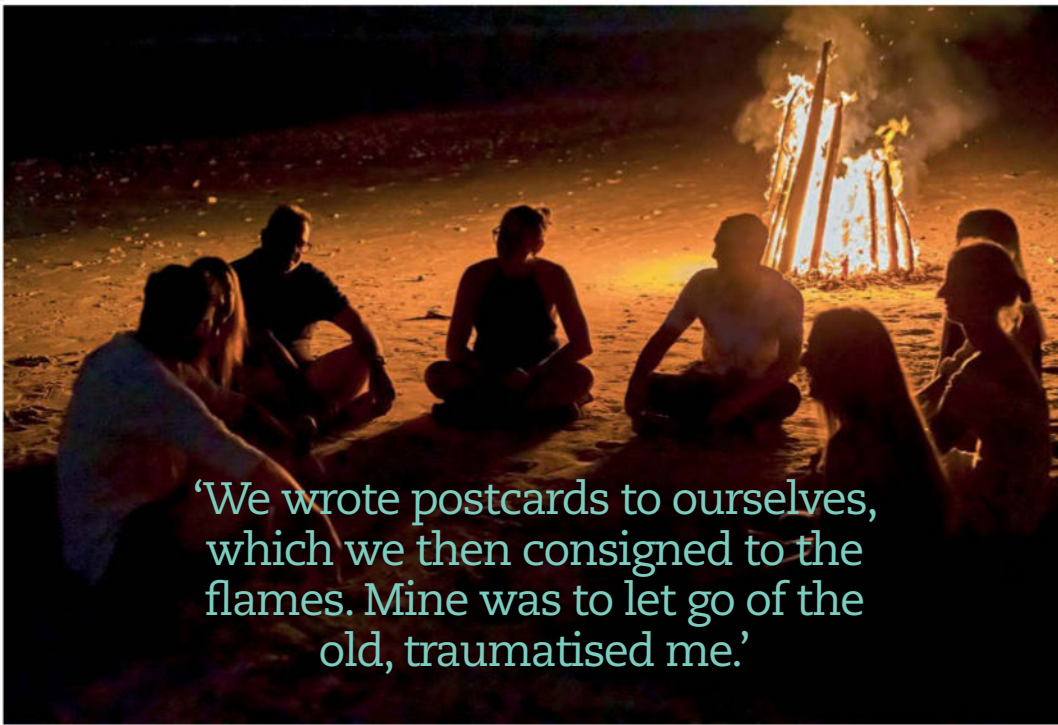
The word “paradise” tends to be banded about with casual abandon but Sumba truly is a Garden of Eden. Carpeted with lush rice terraces and tropical forests as swaying palm trees cast a silhouette against a cloudless blue sky, white-gold beaches run around the island like a ribbon.

The resort of Nihi Sumba, situated on

stunning Nihiwatu beach and tagged the “Edge of Wildness” was a lesson in understated luxury. Having settled into my truly heavenly accommodation – complete with white-linen canopied king-size bed, massive balcony overlooking the Indian ocean and outdoor bathroom – the first evening saw us sitting in a circle with Andreas and his fellow psychotherapist, Raoul Aparici, embarking on a session of group therapy. Minus the two professionals, we numbered eight and were all there for different reasons: burn-out, grief, the breakdown of a relationship, depression, anxiety, exhaustion or a combination of all six. There was little small talk. The object of the exercise was to open up. For some, this proved difficult but I had no problem: think of the proverbial dam overflowing its banks, the metaphor being doubly apt as the tears flowed as profusely as my words. Afterwards, I felt a

Professor Dr Andreas Liefoghe,
a chartered psychologist
and psychotherapist
with one of the horses at
Retreat and Conquer.





‘We wrote postcards to ourselves, which we then consigned to the flames. Mine was to let go of the old, traumatised me.’

sense of relief and a letting go of anxiety. It would be the next day before we encountered the horses.

MAJESTIC CREATURES

Perched on a hillside above the beach, we heard the thunder of hooves before these magnificent animals came into view. What a sight they made as they galloped, free as the day they were born, across the sands! Sumba’s horses are at the heart and soul of the resort – and indeed the island as a whole. Numbering 22 in all, the herd is made up of ponies native to the island, former racehorses and equines that have been rescued.

After their run, the horses roamed among us. We had been instructed to “buddy-up” with the animal we felt most connected to. For me, there was only one contender: a beautiful, sleek chestnut mare who went by the name of Bindi. I approached her and tentatively stroked her nose and patted her neck. To my surprise, I wasn’t scared. She towered over me, big and beautiful – a bit like Beyonce in equine form – and when she looked at me, it felt as if she could see inside my soul. Having bonded with our horses, we took them for a walk and then a ride along the beach. I found myself singing to Bindi but felt far more liberated than foolish. More therapy followed that evening.

While some of us struggled with the notion of what the horses were actually doing for us in a therapeutic sense, I instinctively felt that I “got” it. Bindi was my mirror image – or rather the reflection of who I wanted to be,



Alison and staff member James do some exercises with the horses before building up to the swim.

who I *could* be. She was confident and wouldn’t be cowed. Nobody put Bindi in the corner! She was just herself – there was no other creature she could possibly be – and that was more than good enough. She lived in the moment. For her, the only reality was the here and now. I longed to be a version of Bindi in human form. I had been once. I was determined to be so again.

Sitting on Bindi’s back on day three as she swam in the warm waters of the Indian ocean



is a memory I shall cherish forever. It was scary but exhilaratingly so. If I could do that, I could do anything.

FEELING FREE OF THE PAST

That afternoon, following another session of group therapy, we were divided into pairs and instructed to tell our life stories to our partner as we sat on the beach. I was coupled up with a girl I had not immediately bonded with but by the end of the session, I felt very close to her. As day turned to night and a bonfire blazed on the beach, we wrote individual postcards to ourselves, which we then consigned to the flames. My message said goodbye to the old traumatised me – or at least the one from the past three and a half years. It was a symbolic gesture but I could feel it working. I felt free.

A formal one-to-one therapy session took place before we embarked on a couple of days R&R. Once again, the tears flowed but these were different to the ones I'd shed at the beginning of the week. I could see a future about which I felt positive and happy. I felt calmer and more at peace than I had at any time since life, as I'd known it, had imploded.

It had only been five days but felt much longer. I am still a work in progress as I get to grips with a life I neither chose nor envisaged living, but I'm getting there – and that is due, in no small part, to 'Retreat and Conquer' and my beautiful Bindi.

● Find out more at retreatandconquer.com.



Alison rides Bindi along the shore.

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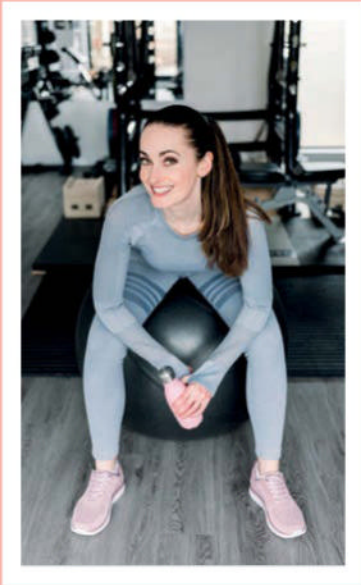
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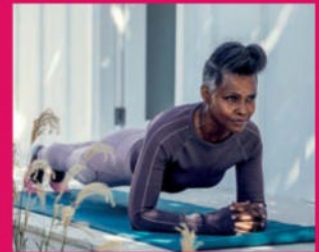
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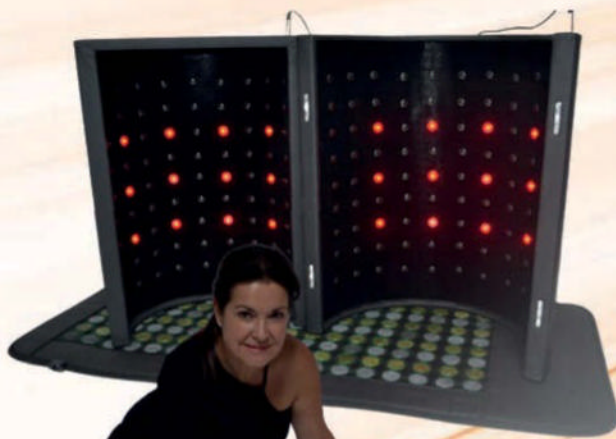


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LOSE WEIGHT FEEL GREAT!

Our special section looks at the latest fat-reducing laser, why intermittent fasting is one of the best ways to shift weight, and an inspiring story about a woman who went from unfit to training to be a PT!

Then & Now

Are we fit?

Our launch issue 30 years ago, back in March 1993, carried the results of an extensive survey of the health of the nation. In terms of climbing the stairs or a hill, two thirds of respondents in 1993 said they “rarely” or “never” got out of breath. In our repeated survey for 2023, things seemed to have declined, as only a third reported “rarely” or “never” getting out of puff, while 44 per cent said they sometimes got out of breath. Time to climb every mountain!

WORDS: KATY SUNNASSEE. IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

‘IF I CAN IMPROVE MY HEALTH, ANYONE CAN!’

Nicola Church, 45, from Hertfordshire, shares how she went from loathing to loving exercise and even changing her career because of it!

IF YOU HAD TOLD ME 10 YEARS AGO that I'd one day become a personal trainer I would have laughed! At school, I hated PE and was always picked last for teams due to my lack of both enthusiasm and sporting ability. I was always the kid in the back, arms crossed, feeling self-conscious.

Fast forward to my 20s, and my dislike of all exercise and sports was no different; I would join gyms, attend a few sessions and then stop. I tried running once but gave up as soon as I got slightly out of puff.

Although I had never been very overweight (I was around 10 stone), by the time I reached age 30 I had been on every diet going from Atkins to Weight Watchers, but I was still not happy with my body.

But things changed after the birth of my youngest daughter, Lucia, in January 2013. I'd put on three stones during pregnancy and had been diagnosed with postnatal depression. To make things worse, I was dealing with the death of my step-mum, Sally, who passed away from cancer a week before Lucia was born. Not only that but Dad had also been diagnosed with terminal cancer around the same time. I felt as if my world was slipping away.

I was unhappy in my body, exhausted from looking after two young daughters and grieving for my step-mum. Then, the unthinkable happened when my dad died nine months later.

Seeing them both slowly fade away from cancer made me realise life isn't a dress rehearsal and I knew I had to make changes as my health was suffering badly.

FROM CARDIO TO WEIGHTS

At first, I wasn't sure where to begin so I spent a lot of time doing just cardio and eating processed foods I thought were healthy, as that's what the labels lead me to believe. The exercise and diet change did help, but I wasn't getting the desired results and I was always hungry and obsessing about my weight. The real change occurred when I started working with a personal trainer who helped me have some lightbulb moments.

He advised me to take stock of my diet, read labels more carefully and eat more natural foods with minimal processing. Once my focus switched to nutrition, rather than just fitness, my body benefited hugely.

Next, he advised me to swap cardio workouts for resistance training. Suddenly I was using barbells and dumbbells as well as going for regular runs. This helped me become fitter and stronger than I had been in my 20s! I felt so much better and also had the added benefit of a huge increase in energy.

I couldn't believe I'd gone from someone who hated PE at school, and pretty much any form of exercise, to someone who could



Nicola after the birth of her daughter, before she embarked on a health and weight-loss journey



KATY SJUNNASSEE, IMAGES: JOHN GILBERT PHOTOGRAPHY

confidently use the weights room at the gym without feeling intimidated. I even did a 13-mile obstacle race to raise money for a cancer charity that involved climbing walls and running through electrical shocks!

A NEW CAREER

In September 2017 I left a well-paid but unhappy job in the public sector and began a personal training course. I now really love what I do, especially seeing the positive changes it can make to people's mental health as well as physical, and I have helped hundreds of people change their mindset around eating and exercise habits to become fitter, healthier, leaner and stronger.

Having been really unfit and unhappy with my body for most of my life, I know how difficult it can be to get motivated and to stick with the new healthy habits. I bring all that past pain and understanding, coupled with my new-found enthusiasm for exercise, to all my one-to-one sessions and online group classes. Helping others regain their zest for life is so rewarding and I love helping people to feel that anything is possible and that they can improve their health no matter their starting point.

Nicola is an online personal trainer and holistic mindset coach helping predominantly 40+ women. Her motto is: "be fixed on the destination and flexible on the journey." To book a free discovery call, visit her website elevationpersonaltraining.com. Also find her at [instagram.com/nicola_onlinept_mindset](https://www.instagram.com/nicola_onlinept_mindset).

8 BENEFITS OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

Nutritionist and author Gabriela Peacock shares why being overweight can lead to internal inflammation but how intermittent fasting provides a solution.



BING OVERWEIGHT CAN REDUCE life expectancy by several years. That's a pretty startling thought. Having too much unnecessary fat may lead to insulin resistance, heart problems, cognitive conditions and chronic inflammation, as well as metabolic and hormonal disruption. And that's before we've even got to how it influences the ageing process. Here's the long and short of it: maintaining a healthy weight throughout your life is one of the most significant investments you can make for yourself now and as you continue to age over the years.

Gaining weight triggers inflammation, but, curiously, as a kind of innate immune response. It seems excess levels of fat cells are perceived as an injury or infection, so the body responds by sending along pro-inflammatory cytokines and immune cells to where excess fat has collected. If the problem were actually an injury or infection, this emergency response would be temporary. Unfortunately, excess adipose tissue that is not dealt with continues to over-stimulate

the immune system. This is when inflammation can become chronic, disrupting the balance of the body's metabolism.

This results in adipose tissue itself becoming very inflammatory, spreading more inflammation to its neighbouring organs and tissue like a wildfire, which in turn contributes to systemic inflammation within the body as a whole; this is a classic hallmark of ageing. Think of the longest lines of dominoes possible, but on fire.

Weight gain is a vicious circle. The more inflammation you have, the more prone you become to gaining weight. That's why being overweight can be described as a form of "low-grade chronic inflammation" with the potential to lead to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, making it harder to lose weight, but easier to keep gaining it!

But every change you implement, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction to restoring balance and changing the future of your health.



INTERMITTENT FASTING

Long-term calorie restriction leads to an initial drop in weight but will ultimately result in what is known as metabolic adaptation. This is when the body starts to panic about when its next refuel will happen and, as a result, stores energy in fat cells as an emergency back-up. This slowing down of the metabolism when calorie restriction is enforced over long periods of time means that the body is adapting to what is happening and any positive effects will radically slow down. Without entering a proper fasting state, the beneficial side effects reduce – ketone production will be lower because the body is still receiving glucose and autophagy isn't triggered to its full capacity. In contrast, doing intermittent fasting keeps the body on its toes with temporary calorie restriction

balanced with time-restricted eating. This means the body won't panic but will instead lose weight healthily while also triggering autophagy.

Intermittent fasting (IF) involves controlled periods of eating and fasting and is the umbrella term for many of today's most popular weight loss plans (time-restricted eating, calorie-restricted diets, 5:2 and alternate-day fasting). It is the most researched and impactful form of weight loss, with scientific evidence to prove the numerous beneficial effects it has on general health and longevity.

What IF does for the body is truly transformative as it enables you to take control of your general health, mental health, weight, sleep, energy levels and more. It really has the power to change the course of your life.



Discover the benefits of IF

1 YOU'LL REDUCE VISCERAL FAT

Fasting works in two ways when it comes to weight loss. One is the controlled reduction of calorie intake, which ideally means consuming less, putting the body into a calorie deficit. The second, is it triggers ketosis and autophagy. This enhances and rebalances several crucial hormone functions to break down fat cells, including lowering insulin levels and increasing the metabolic rate. More calories are used than consumed, which drives weight loss.

IF targets visceral fat, the inflammatory kind that collects around the abdomen and can cause serious health problems. It preserves muscle mass, which is often one of the first things that takes a hit with less healthy diets, maintaining a balanced body composition.

2 LESS INFLAMMATION

Autophagy has a radical effect on how the immune system produces its cells and even on their quality. Reducing nutrient intake during fasting drives the body to clear out or repair compromised immune cells. This also stimulates the production of new, fighting fit cells, upgrading the immune response in its entirety to function at a far higher level.

One of the major benefits of this is the effect it has on chronic inflammation – the dreaded companion of excess weight and ageing. Studies have shown that fasting reduces the number of monocytes (which secrete proinflammatory cytokines) moving around the body. These pro-inflammatory cells duck and dive around in the bloodstream and have the potential to cause severe

damage to tissues and organs – a problem that has become prevalent for many people in recent years because of bad eating habits. Periods of fasting actually put monocytes into “sleep mode” and even makes them less inflammatory.

3 IMPROVED IMMUNITY

Fasting has also been shown to improve the memory of immune cells, which is a central component of how they work. During an illness or infection, immune cells learn to recognise invading pathogens. If they turn up again, the immune system will remember how to deal with them. Autophagy is able to improve their memories. Like microscopic elephants, they forget nothing.

4 BETTER SLEEP

Your energy levels go up when doing IF. One of the reasons for this is the effect fasting has on sleep. Scientific research has shown that within just a week of doing IF, sleep vastly improves. Everything, from waking up in the night, being unable to settle, thrashing around and getting twitchy limbs, settles down and allows your body to rest properly.

Also, going to bed on a stomach that's not full will help the brain synchronise itself with the digestive system and circadian rhythm, so everything is working towards the same goal: shutting down for the night.

IF also stimulates a rise in melatonin, the sleep-inducing hormone, allowing for better quality and more restful sleep, as well as boosting human growth hormone (HGH) which helps with cell repair overnight.

You need muscle!

Muscle is heavier than fat – that's why exercising more may make the scales go up instead of down. It is also metabolically active, meaning it needs to burn glucose to create energy in order to help the body move. In stark contrast, fat doesn't need energy to function, so healthy weight loss needs to strike the right balance between muscle mass and necessary fat. Scales make it hard for us to see the whole picture, which can be damaging if you're hooked on seeing the numbers!



5 MORE ENERGY

Better sleep means increased energy during the day, with a bonus side order of improved concentration and stabilised moods. Mitochondria, the energy hubs of the cell, are specifically targeted during this mild form of stress (mitohormesis), triggering a protective response that increases their resilience.

Alongside this, the energy used by dwindling cells to keep themselves going is also freed up, thanks to autophagy, which either clears them up or repairs them. This all ultimately leads to greater energy levels, better cellular function and healthy longevity.

6 A SHARPER BRAIN

The brain loves ketones. In the absence of glucose during fasting, the liver burns adipose tissue as fuel and this is when ketones are produced – a superfood for the brain. They have the unusual ability to cross the blood-brain barrier and fire up the brain so mental clarity is noticeably sharper. Ketones are extremely valuable for those with neurodegenerative conditions and other diseases associated with ageing. Put simply, fasting is like taking your brain on a deluxe spa weekend!

7 A HEALTHIER HEART

In its capacity to reduce chronic inflammation, IF also lowers the risk of blood vessels being damaged, which can often lead to heart conditions. And it's not all about avoiding problems – the heart improves functionality thanks to IF. It affects the way the body metabolises glucose and reduces "bad" cholesterol (low-density lipoproteins or LDL), all of which impact body weight and the potential to develop diabetes. Quite understandably, the heart loves intermittent fasting!

8 A CALM DIGESTION

Fasting improves digestion by giving the GI tract a break from normal activity by temporarily not adding more to its workload. It allows it to focus on repairing issues that need addressing, calming down any adverse food reactions and eliminating waste matter from the digestive tract. It also amplifies fermentation and diversity of the microbiome, increasing its number of bacterial species and even the fatty acids that feed the beneficial bacteria. This is good news for digestion but also for the immune system, as around 70 per cent of it resides in the digestive tract.

Good and bad fat

Fat comes in two forms. The unpopular white kind, which stores energy and which we're always trying to get rid of because it makes our favourite jeans too tight; and the heroic brown, metabolic kind, which generates heat, keeps us warm and burns calories. Both cushion and protect us. We need the stuff. It is critical to our survival!

The science part

Learn how your hormones also affect weight gain...

LEPTIN AND GHRELIN The stomach lining secretes the hunger hormone ghrelin, which stimulates appetite. Its levels peak in anticipation of eating. Known as the satiety hormone, leptin is secreted from mainly fat cells. Its job is to manage appetite and energy levels; it tells the hypothalamus when the body has had enough to eat. Too much leptin can desensitise the brain's response to it. Instead of feeling satisfied, the brain tricks the body into thinking it's still hungry and needs to eat more. It thinks it needs to store more fat – which it doesn't – and this is known as leptin resistance.

INSULIN When food is eaten, glucose enters the bloodstream. The body releases insulin from the pancreas to collect the glucose and transport it to the mitochondria within the cells for energy production. Insulin helps to regulate, convert and activate glucose. The body needs a certain amount of glucose for immediate use because it needs to maintain ever-fluctuating levels of energy. However, anything it doesn't need straight away gets transformed into glycogen and stored in the liver and muscles. When those storage spaces are full, excess glycogen is transformed again into triglycerides, a type of fat, and stored in adipose tissue. Unlike liver and muscle cells, adipose tissue doesn't have a limit on how much it can store. You can see where we're going with this.

A diet that is high in carbs or sugar makes the pancreas keep having to produce insulin to cope with the influx of glucose in its efforts to stabilise blood sugar levels. This makes the body think it has plenty of energy available for immediate use and therefore need not turn to its stored reserves in adipose tissue; in fact, what it believes instead is that it should be storing more. Hello weight gain!



2 Weeks to a Younger You: Secrets to living longer & feeling fantastic, by Gabriela Peacock (£25, Kyle Books) is out now.

Alice in *weight-loss* wonderland



Discovering a *lightness* of being

This month our weight-loss columnist Alice Dogruyol discovers what it means to balance body and mind, get fitter, eat well and lose weight in the process, at The Body Retreat, Dorset.

I had been struggling to manage my blood sugar levels and motivate myself to exercise; I was in a vicious cycle of eating the wrong things, feeling extremely fatigued, my weight had plateaued, and I was in need of a complete mind and body reset. Despite my best intentions, I couldn't seem to find the motivation to implement all the things I knew I could be doing, so I booked into The Body Retreat, a women-only weight-loss retreat in Dorchester, in the hope that it would be the catalyst for change that I needed.

The train journey from London to Dorchester South was easy. At the station, I jumped into a taxi with two other women who were also heading to the retreat. They were "returners" who had both been several times before and could not speak highly enough about it; they couldn't wait to get started on their annual retreat and neither could I. In fact, one woman had extended her retreat to a second consecutive week as she had loved the first week so much.

We arrived at the beautiful sprawling stone farmhouse where we quickly settled in and Jules Abernethy and Julie Brealy, The Body Retreat co-founders,

warmly welcomed us into the luxurious, cosy living room. Then, in front of a roaring open fire they talked us through what to expect over the next week.

Any anxieties I had about the trip began to melt away and I quickly felt reassured that I was exactly where I needed to be. The location was stunning, the bed super-comfortable and the small group of women were lovely. The philosophy and programme



at The Body Retreat was exactly what I hoped it would be. Everything was designed around female biology and based on eating better and moving smarter whilst nurturing emotional health. I wondered: would this place finally help me reclaim my body and resolve my complicated relationship with food? I was excited to find out...

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

That night, we enjoyed a welcome dinner of a delicious Mediterranean bean stew on a bed of rocket with feta crumbles. And it's no surprise that the food on offer was exemplary, as Jules not only runs the retreat but is a professional and exceedingly talented chef with a profound understanding of nutrition. She managed to elevate healthy, unprocessed, simple ingredients to a whole new level that I didn't think was possible! Her passion for food and flavour was evident in every dish and there was always a thoughtful extra touch in each perfectly balanced meal. Her wild garlic pesto and grilled halloumi salad was a sensation – better than I've eaten in any restaurant in the world.

WORDS: ALICE DOGRUYOL. IMAGES: ALICE DOGRUYOL, SHUTTERSTOCK AND THE BODY RETREAT.



'The feeling of accomplishment after completing a 10k walk was a real confidence boost.'

Everyone's food preferences and dietary requirements were catered to. I wanted a lower-carb diet than the others, while some didn't want dairy or gluten; we were all listened to and served three beautifully prepared meals and a snack each day.

I'd stopped drinking coffee on the run up to the retreat, but nonetheless, everyone was offered a cup of freshly brewed black organic coffee every morning, which I managed to abstain from.

During the week we attended insightful talks on food and nutrition where Jules debunked diet myths, cleared up confusion around weight management and explained her 80/20 rule. Jules encourages women to follow

healthy food rules 80 per cent of the time with 20 per cent leeway, because she recognises that we aren't robots and can't be perfect all the time.

CONSCIOUS COOKING

Two words that were never uttered on the retreat were, "diet" or "restriction". The Body Retreat has a very clear food philosophy coined by Jules as "conscious cooking", which is about making conscious choices at every stage of the food journey. As a NLP master, behaviour coach and hypnotherapist she was adept at making us all think about what we eat, when we eat, how we eat and why we eat. This was the first retreat I had attended that took a deep dive into all



the complex aspects of food with which I've struggled for so long.

Part of our daily practice at the dinner table was to chew slowly, put down our cutlery in between each bite and to always leave a small piece of food on our plate – three things I rarely do at home. It was amazing how much fuller and better I felt just doing these three simple things at each mealtime.

GETTING MOVING

I'm not at my fittest or in the best shape of my life, so I was worried I might not be able to cope with the daily exercise regime, but thankfully there was no pressure to attend all the activities. Much to my delight, the exercise classes were delivered in 15-20-minute bursts, occasionally a little longer, which was a revelation to me. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to slog it out at the gym for an hour to achieve a good energy burn – exercise can actually be fast and fun! Recent research all points to 15 minutes of intense activity being more effective than prolonged gentler exercise, which was music to my ears.

Julie, a professional PT, weight management specialist, former semi-pro sports woman and ultra-marathon runner, designed and delivered our morning workouts. They got our hearts racing without being too gruelling or intimidating like other bootcamps I've been to in the past. The classes varied each day: kettlebells,

circuits, dance, Pilates, yoga, swimming and water aerobics.

MINDFUL WALKS

As well as the intense exercise and nutritious food, it was the daily, guided country walks with Julie that were a personal highlight. Some stumps were more challenging than others; plodding uphill through muddy fields was tricky at times but reaching the top

of a hill and looking out over the rolling green hills was breath taking. To be in such unspoiled nature was incredibly uplifting and the feeling of accomplishment after completing a 10k walk was a real confidence boost. The walks varied in length and difficulty, but I managed to complete all of them.

I had fallen out of the habit of taking daily walks and it reminded me how invigorating and energising walking in nature can be. I wasn't as speedy as the others but we all caught up with each other at meeting points and had lovely bonding chats as we meandered through the woods, slopes and valleys.

MIND OVER MATTER

For me, I believe the majority of my weight gain is certainly rooted in my emotions. As a young child I started comforting myself with food to survive the pain of losing my grandmother, and the habit followed me into adulthood. In my case, as a type 1 diabetic, I also have significant hormonal imbalances that impact my hunger levels, energy levels, feelings of fullness and fat storage, making weight loss and exercise even more





'A week at The Body Retreat gave me the best blood sugar readings I've had in two years!'

challenging than normal. So, it was a relief to learn that Jules understands how emotions impact our food choices and she tackled this head on during the week by giving insightful fireside talks exploring the ways we relate to food. She did a great job of removing the stress from eating and making it a joyful experience. Her group hypnosis session, which was centred around self-love, nourishment and putting you back in control of your health, was a powerful end to the retreat.

TREAT YOURSELF

Throughout our stay, we all had some wonderful massages, facials and sessions in a contraption called The Body Ballancer® – a lymphatic drainage compression garment that you slip into, lie back, then let it gently roll over your body helping to increase circulation and decongest fluid build-up in your legs, hips, tummy and bum (you can also use it on your arms). It's used by athletes to aid recovery and avoid delayed onset muscle soreness, or DOMS as it accelerates the removal of waste products and excess fluid via the lymphatic system, reducing the appearance of cellulite, improving skin tone, and giving you a super-relaxing massage. I loved it! I would happily

have used it every day and have been fantasising about having one at home, but I'd first need to win the lottery!

THE RESULTS...

By the end of the week, I'd lost four kilos – almost nine pounds in seven days. I'd also lost several centimetres from my waist, legs, hips and arms. I'd

been weighing myself on my Withings Body Scan scales (see July issue), which showed my fat reducing and muscle increasing daily, as well as a reduction in visceral fat. It was great to see those trends emerging and all while eating three meals a day and a snack.

But by the end of the retreat, I wasn't so bothered about the numbers as I was feeling empowered, motivated and proud of myself. I was chewing more slowly, eating well and exercising.

While at The Body Retreat I also had the best blood sugar readings I've had for two years. My glucose monitor showed I was 96 per cent in range! I also learned that balance in all aspects of my life was possible. The things I was reminded of, the new things I learned, and the beautiful people I met, will stay with me for a long time. I expect I too will become a "returner" and I can't wait to go back.



The Body Retreat has locations in Dorset, Somerset and France. To find out more and book a stay, visit thebodyretreat.co.uk. Prices start from £2,350.



WORDS: JO WEBBER. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.



SAY SO-LONG TO STRESS BELLY

Reducing stress and its effects during midlife can help you to both feel more energised and ward off weight gain around your middle, says nutritionist, author and menopause expert Karen Newby.

CORTISOL IS OUR PRIMARY STRESS hormone – along with adrenaline and noradrenalin – and is produced in the adrenal glands (little glands that sit on top of the kidneys) that are hard-wired to the body’s “fight- or-flight” survival response. Thousands of years ago this response would have been essential to either fight or run away from a wild animal. But our bodies are still wired to be hunter-gatherers. Unfortunately, your body can’t tell the difference between running away from a wild animal and sitting at your desk with a coffee getting stressed about spreadsheets – the stress response is the same. Cortisol releases stored blood sugar in your liver and redirects this glucose to the lungs, heart, brain and eyes and away from what it deems unnecessary, such as the digestive, detox, immune and reproductive systems. This is why periods can stop if you’re under a lot of stress (as a protection against pregnancy): the body chooses survival over fertility.

HOW STRESSED ARE YOU?

Do you... [tick the appropriate boxes]

- Feel tired all the time?
- Have trouble getting up in the morning, even when you go to bed at a reasonable hour?
- Feel rundown or overwhelmed?
- Have difficulty bouncing back from stress or illness?
- Crave salty and sweet snacks?
- Have weight gain around the middle?
- Feel more awake, alert and energetic after 6pm than you did earlier on?
- Feel irritable a lot of the time?
- Have a lower tolerance to stress?

If you ticked most of the above, stress is affecting your life and health!

RESPONDING TO STRESS

Stress can be termed as anything that challenges your survival... even just being busy. Stress can be physical; chemical, emotional, thermal (from intense cold or heat) or from infection. It all leads to elevated cortisol, which has a negative impact on hormones, digestion, insulin resistance, obesity, blood-glucose balance and brain function. It also has a massive effect on sleep by mucking up your sleep/wake cycle, called the diurnal rhythm. The more stressed you are, the worse you sleep; the worse you sleep, the less resilient you are to stress, which leads to more stimulants and low-nutrient food, which makes sleep worse!

In perimenopause, your adrenal glands produce a 12-times weaker form of oestrogen, called oestrone, as well as a weaker form of progesterone. As the ovaries start to quieten, you become more reliant on these weaker hormones. Nourishing your adrenals glands in midlife is therefore crucial in helping you become more resilient to stress, and to support the weaker forms of oestrogen and progesterone made by them.

THE WORRY WAIST

A classic sign of too much cortisol is an expanding belly and/or waistline. It is also due to declining oestrogen levels – the change to abdominal fat is a much more male (testosterone) pattern of weight gain. Suddenly you can start to gain weight around the middle or get a “muffin top”. These central-weight fat cells is that they are not inert, like fat stores on the bottom, hips and thighs. Unfortunately, this central weight interferes with hormones as it starts to convert testosterone to oestrogen (but not a type that has a protective effects). Central fat cells make inflammatory cytokines and, as cortisol is a natural anti-inflammatory hormone, this has the effect of stimulating your adrenals to make more cortisol to deal with the inflammation.

My following tips can help you start the day right with balanced blood sugar, which will help reduce the effects of cortisol and stress...



6 SELF-CARE TIPS TO START YOUR DAY

Karen's simple morning routine will help you beat stress for a slimmer midriff.

1 Drink a warm cup of water with a slice of lemon upon waking.

Doing so helps to stimulate your liver and gives you a little vitamin C.

2 Do fasted exercise when you have the time.

This means exercising before you eat anything or drink caffeine. This helps boost your

metabolism and preps your body to better deal with carbs you eat at breakfast and later in the day.

3 Have a high-protein breakfast.

Doing so helps boost your metabolism and reduce the need for so much caffeine. For example, have eggs any which way; a green



SMALL SHIFTS TO REDUCE STRESS

Aside from dietary changes, these other tricks can lighten your life!

- Laughter – it stimulates endorphins, our feel-good chemicals.
- Building a sense of gratitude – including for small things.
- Cultivating healthy social relationships – and parking less helpful ones.
- Spending time in nature – I love the Japanese concept of forest bathing.
- Fun and play – many of us don't give ourselves time to have fun anymore.
- Dance and movement – why not have a kitchen disco?
- Active rest – don't feel guilty for stopping and staring out the window!

smoothie using more veg than fruit; low-sugar granola with almond or coconut yogurt; Bircher with oat milk, ground linseed, grated ginger, cinnamon and berries; or scrambled tofu; avocado with grilled mushrooms and tomatoes.

4 Enjoy your caffeine with your breakfast only. Caffeine puts you into fight-or-flight mode. It elevates cortisol and adrenaline levels, both at rest and in periods of stress. So, even though your day might not be stressful, caffeine will be making you more on edge, which is why you can get that jangly feeling if you've had too much. Don't get me wrong: I get a huge amount of joy from my coffee, but I enjoy one or two cups a day only at breakfast (I have recently switched to decaf, which has massively helped my stress levels and afternoon energy).

Therefore, I advise only drinking caffeine with breakfast or replace it

with a decaf or herbal tea later on. Food helps to reduce caffeine's metabolic effect, too.

5 Take time to eat your breakfast. Enjoy and look forward to your first meal, eating it slowly and mindfully to aid digestion.

6 Eat well to beat stress. Not only at breakfast but at every meal, keeping your blood sugar balanced is crucial for reducing stress (see p90 for more). Support your hard-working adrenals with the following:

- **VITAMIN C** Find this in green leafy vegetables, parsley, citrus fruits, peppers, kiwis, dark berries.
- **B5** Egg yolks are rich in B5, as are broccoli, fish, shellfish, organic yogurt, legumes.
- **B6:** Find this in broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, nuts, pumpkin, spinach.
- **PROTEIN** Find good-quality protein in bone broth, eggs, oily fish, tofu,

tempeh, pulses and quinoa.

- **MAGNESIUM** Black beans, pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds, green leafy veg and almonds are all rich in magnesium.
- **ADAPTOGENS** Maca, turmeric, Rhodiola rosea, liquorice (tea) and ashwagandha all help to blunt the stress response.

Find more advice in Karen Newby's book, *The Natural Menopause Method: A nutritional guide to perimenopause and beyond* (£14.99, Pavilion Books). You can also connect with her at [instagram.com/karen.newby.nutritionist](https://www.instagram.com/karen.newby.nutritionist).





SEEING GREEN

Editor-in-Chief Katy Sunnassee trials Verju laser therapy to see whether it can reduce her hip and waist measurements.

MIDDLE-AGED SPREAD. Isn't that a lovely term?! As I wrote in my Katy Peri column last issue, I never could understand how women's waistlines expanded in middle age... until I turned 42 and the same began to happen to me, without really any worsening of my diet. All of a sudden, I became more aware of the growing paunch that jiggles when I run up or down the stairs.

And so, in a bid to reduce the mum tum and put a stop to the expansion, I turned to a new laser treatment that's reducing cellulite and waistlines around the world.

Erchonia Verju® Low Level Light

Laser is FDA approved for fat loss, cellulite reduction and body contouring. Sometimes referred to as "Emerald laser", due to its green beams, the revolutionary treatment helps reduce fat and cellulite. 'The machine emits six beams of light that are absorbed by your fat cells, "reprogramming" them to make them think you are dieting and exercising, and therefore to release their contents,' says Wayne Elphinstone, who offers the treatment as The Laser Room in Colchester, Essex (highwoodschiropractic.co.uk).

'Fat cells are very good at storing fat and locking it in, which is why sometimes it is difficult to lose fat on some parts of the body,' says Wayne.

'However, when the fat cells absorb the beams of light from the laser, they become really active, as if they were being "super charged".'

When the cells become active, they open up and release the fatty acids stored inside, causing them to shrink. These fatty acids are then circulated through your body for use as energy, for example through your muscles. 'Any fatty acids your body doesn't use are excreted through your lymphatic system,' says Wayne.

Unlike some other fat-loss and/or body contouring machines, Verju does not destroy the fat cells. Instead, the cells are reprogrammed to become healthy, meaning they function



THE LOW DOWN...

- Verju can be applied to various areas of the body: legs, stomach, back etc. You can lay on your front, sides or back (or a combination).
- It's completely painless – doesn't touch you or heat you.
- The laser emitted is 432nm which is effective for fat loss.
- Results improve if you combine with moderate exercise and healthy eating.
- You're advised to massaging the area afterwards, go for a 15-20 minute walk each day, drink lots of water and limit caffeine and alcohol.

what makes it effective as the beams are penetrating into your body and pretty much all the light is going in, as opposed to some devices where a lot of the light just bounces back off. Verju gives good absorption of the energy,' explains Wayne.

HIPS DON'T LIE!

The best part is it's completely painless. Other devices designed to reduce fat can often involve compression or suction, which can be painful and possibly leave bruising.

There's also no downtime – in fact the treatment gave me the opportunity to lie back and relax for 40 minutes, which was a welcome break in my busy week.

And having trialled it for six weeks, I can say with certainty that it works! Let's begin though by saying I'm not overweight and don't have masses of fat to lose, so my results were not as drastic as some people Wayne has treated – one client had a reduction of 9cm off their hips, 7cm off their waist and 5cm off each leg, also after six sessions! After my six sessions I had gone from a hip measurement of 96cm to 89.5cm, and a waist measurement of 83cm to 81.5cm (these would have decreased further after the last session).

At home, my husband measured me with his callipers, although admittedly we forgot to do that before session one. On the day of, and before, session three though, my umbilical area (right next to the belly button) had 14.8mm of fat, and just before session six it was 12.5mm. However, my suprailiac (just above the hip bone) was 8mm before session three but 10.2 on session six. Wayne's tape measurements showed I did put on half a centimetre in this area between session five and six and here's why: a trip to Rome during half term! That slightly scuppered results as, inevitably,

effectively and don't store up too much fat. This is what helps the treatment to be long lasting.

'The laser doesn't heat the tissues – you don't want to be killing fat cells as they help regulate your hormones,' says Wayne, adding that you get similar results to that of diet and exercise but much faster thanks to the laser speeding the process. 'The fat cells remain open for 6-7 days afterwards if you keep active, and any fat not used up through energy expenditure is drained away by your lymphatic system.'

Verju also differs from some other laser treatments in that the beam is focused and doesn't scatter. 'That's





BEFORE (not holding it in)

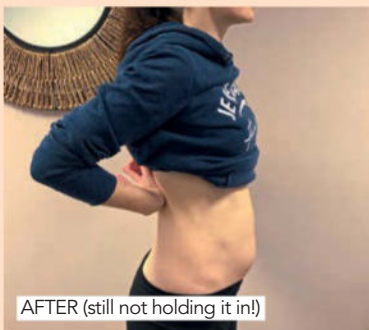
KATY'S RESULTS...

Tape measurements in clinic

- Hips before: 96cm
- Hips after: 89.5
- Waist before: 83cm
- Waist after: 81.5

Calliper measurements at home

- Hips before: 8mm
- Hips after: 10.2mm (could have been mismeasurement as previous week was 8.2mm)
- Waist before: 14.8mm
- Waist after: 12.5mm



AFTER (still not holding it in!)

I gorged on carbs! Who can resist proper Italian pizza and gelato though? Also, that measurement might have been slightly off as the previous weeks were all in the 8mm range.

Of course, I wanted miracles from Verju, and by miracles I mean to regain the washboard stomach I had in my 20s and early 30s with no jiggle whatsoever! But I had a baby at age 39, then became increasingly inactive due to that, and now work from home (more inactivity), plus now perimenopause is in the mix. So, although I didn't get back to my "former glory", I was highly impressed with the results as they were there on paper – "hips don't lie" as Shakira sang! So much so, I booked a further couple of sessions. My husband also said he thought my tummy looked tighter.

I want to add that during the six-week trial, I purposefully *didn't* improve my diet as I wanted to be able to tell whether or not any results were down to the machine; if I'd gone on a health kick I wouldn't have known whether any results were from those efforts or the laser. Therefore, I can genuinely say my results were down to this remarkable laser and would have probably been even better had

I upped my exercise and not binged on carbs one week. And this is what Wayne recommends anyway, as he gives you lifestyle advice and sees the weight-loss process as a long-term, holistic one. You're encouraged to go for brisk walks, especially on the day of a session, reduce your alcohol and caffeine intake, drink lots of water, and generally increase your movement each day. Each session also ends with a few minutes on a vibration plate to get your lymph flowing straight away.

If you stick to healthy habits and use Verju to augment them, your body will become better at processing fat and you'll see inch reduction. However, you can't expect it to produce miracles and counteract slothful habits and/or binging. But if you're getting ready for a holiday or a special occasion and have at least six weeks to devote to slimming down, you will get results and they'll last longer if you couple them with exercise and eating well.

● To hear Wayne talking more about Verju and see me having the treatment, go to [instagram.com/thehealtheditor](https://www.instagram.com/thehealtheditor).



The Laser Room is a family run clinic, operating at the same location as Highwoods Chiropractic in Colchester, Essex. Treatment is carried out by either chiropractor Wayne or his partner, mental health nurse Hannah. Find out more at [highwoodschiropractic.co.uk/thelaserroom](https://www.highwoodschiropractic.co.uk/thelaserroom) and follow them at [instagram.com/thelaserroomcolchester](https://www.instagram.com/thelaserroomcolchester).



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Check out the latest tennis garb, go hiking in style and discover a more natural way to move.

YOUR STYLISH SUMMER

The new Columbia Deschutes Valley Heritage Skeena River Jacket (£135, columbiasportswear.co.uk), is water- and stain-repellent and is so versatile with its detachable sleeves and multiple pockets for all your essentials. Inspired by the lush landscape of Oregon's scenic Deschutes River, the entire new Columbia range is built for hiking, active travel and messing about on the river and will support all your adventures in comfort and style this summer. You'll find a range of tops, bottoms and cover-ups for all shapes and sizes, plus co-ordinating footwear, backpacks and hats in a choice of pastels or vibrant prints.



TOP Sante
For more fitness content, visit our website [topsante.co.uk!](http://topsante.co.uk)

WORDS: JO EBSWORTH. IMAGE: VARIOUS BRANDS.

PACK IT UP!

Sleek and stylish enough for the gym and the daily commute, but roomy enough for weekend hikes, the **Thule Subterra 34l Travel Rucksack** (£150, thule.com) has lots of refined features to organise your items, including a removable packing cube to optimise space. The main compartment can be accessed through the wide roll top opening or the side zip – handy for when you need to find items further down the bag – and there’s a padded laptop sleeve, along with smaller pockets for electronics, and a PowerPocket to make charging your phone or tablet easier on the go.



HUMAN NATURE

The MAVERICKS Way is an educational hub that brings the science of human movement to life. From its training centre in the Swiss Alps, the group provides cutting-edge training resources to help you learn how to let your body thrive in modern times. Access free Human FUNctional Training lessons and webinars, and find out about seasonal London-based indoor and outdoor events, or purchase lifetime access to the **MAVERICK-ONE Human Functional Training Online Workout** (£30, themavericksway.org) to rediscover your body’s ability to balance, walk, run, squat, jump, sit, crawl, twist and stand with agility and freedom.

TESTED: ‘I tried the 60-minute session several times and promise it will leave your body feeling alive, energised, open and truly powerful, so you can evolve your skills for the sports you love and unlock hidden human abilities!’ Jo Ebsworth, fitness editor.



ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

Designed onsite at SW19, just steps away from Centre Court, the **All England Lawn Tennis Club 2023 Wimbledon Retail Collection** (from £40, shop.wimbledon.com) is its biggest to date. Featuring classic tennis whites, performance wear and preppy varsity styles, the stunning range now includes a semi-formal “smart casual” capsule collection for the first time ever, so you can watch and play tennis in style. Sold exclusively onsite and online at the Wimbledon Shop. We love this pleated Core Performance Skort (£55) available in green, white or navy.

36% ... of people feel they don’t have enough time to work out, according to research from PureGym.

6 MOVES FOR SHAPELY THIGHS

Feel better in midlife with the help of fitness expert and PT, Joey Bull. This month, she focuses on how to strengthen and tone your thighs for more slender legs.

YOU CAN IMPROVE the look of your thighs by adding more muscle definition. Your thighs contain large muscle groups, meaning if you work them, you'll help boost your metabolism as you'll be burning more energy when at rest – same with your glutes, which we covered in the previous issue.

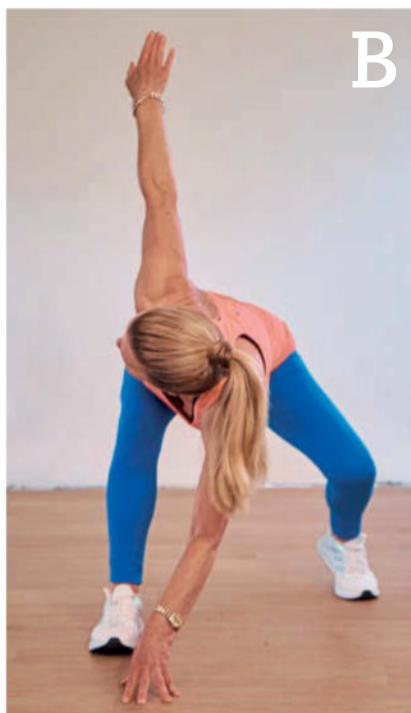
Different sports amplify different parts of the leg, for instance female skiers have powerful and well-sized thighs and less mass in the backs of the legs (hamstrings). Sprinters have well developed backsides, quads and hamstrings, making them athletic and shapely. But even if you're not a professional athlete you can still help shape your legs with a little training.

If you feel your legs are a bit chunky or even if you find your legs a little spindly, adding contours can help you fall in love with them when you look in the mirror. Imagine more shape to your hamstrings, a more defined curve on the outer thigh – that's what you'll be doing with these exercises.

Here's to your shapely new pins!



Once you've mastered a couple of sessions of this workout doing each move once, do each one twice and mix up the order or start with the ones you feel are most difficult.



1 WIDE LUNGE WITH ROTATION

This is a move I've used for decades; I like it because it suits most people despite any ankle, hip or knee issues. The extra rotation teaches you to use your bum more effectively in bending and reaching, too.

- Stand in a wide lunge position, with

one foot behind the other but with a broader stance (A). This helps with stability and depth of the move.

- Bending your front leg a lot and the back one a little less, lunge down reaching the opposite arm to front leg (B).
- Allow your chest to come towards

the front thigh, rotating towards the leg, looking behind you with the other arm high – think of an airplane turning (C). This activates the hamstring, glutes and front thigh.

- Start with 8-10 on each leg and add light weights once you've got the hang of it for next time.

2 CURTSEY CROSS

This targets multiple places on your upper leg, quads, hamstrings, abductors (the side of the hips) and backside.

- Place one foot on an elevated object, step or low stool. Position the other leg behind at a crossed angle, as if in a curtsy (A). Rotate the front foot's toes inwards, inverting them, pigeon toes style.
- Keeping your back straight, bend down with both knees, focusing around your backside (B). Slowly straighten up again.
- Aim for 6-8 perfect cross curtsies. Add weights once you've got used to the exercise.
- Push for 12 repetitions, feeling each one.





3 WIDE PLIES

This is great for working the legs on a different plane and getting into some parts of the thigh and buttocks not normally reached! Areas worked will be the outer quad muscle, responsible for making a sexy sweep shape rather than chunkier line, as well as inner thighs and very low in the buttock muscles, around the gluteal fold.

- Stand with feet wide and toes turned out (A).
- Bend your knees and take them out wide over your toes (B), keeping upright in your body, not leaning forward. You should feel it on the insides of your legs.
- As you come up, focus on the outer part of the thigh and tighten the muscles at the end of each movement.
- Play with the rhythms. Try 10 normal bends, hold low for 10 counts and then bounce for 10.
- Add weights when you're ready for more intensity and hold them on your shoulders.



4 ROMANIAN LUNGE

These raised lunges place emphasis on the vastus medialis – the teardrop muscle above the knee, which plays a role in adding leg shaping and removing the flat or chubby knee look. They also work your backside.

- Elevate one foot onto a low chair, step or bench behind you. Hop forward the front foot to make a good stride distance (A).
- Ensure knees and toes are facing forward as you bend both legs into a lunge (B), maintaining good balance.
- Focus on a steady, low lunge and a straight supporting leg at the end of the movement.
- Aim for 8 on each leg. Add weights when you're familiar with the move.



5 SHORT STANCE RAISED LEG LUNGE

The areas worked most in this move at your quads.

- With one foot elevated on a step or raised area behind you, keep your standing leg close to you so both knees are together (A).
- Bending the supporting front leg, lower down slowly with knee extending over the foot (B), keeping your chest high and shoulders relaxed.
- Focus on your balance, moving slowly.
- Do 6-8 reps and add weights when this feels too easy.



6 SHORT STANCE LEAN BACKS

This is a modified version of the double-legged lean back and is good for developing stability and strength in your knee and pelvis. Done correctly, you will quickly feel this in the front of the thighs – good for creating definition!

- Stand with both feet together and slide your right foot back the length of one of your feet, to make the starting position (A).
- Bend both knees and tilt your pelvis backwards, so your tailbone tucks under (B). You may already feel a slight pull in the thigh that is positioned behind.
- Add some slow and low bounces, maintaining the tilted pelvic position.
- Do 8-10 repetitions then change sides and add weights in a few sessions' time.



Joey's 30 years in fitness covers competing, coaching, writing and radio. As a natural medicine practitioner, she blends her knowledge of the body for all into live and online courses. Specialising in regaining youth and self-care, with a particular interest in hormones and middle age, *The Best Is Yet To Come* course is an example of vitality revived, at any age. Visit joeybull.com.





STEP ON THE ACCELERATOR

This issue in her regular column, Joanna Hall, aka The WalkActive Coach, shares tips on how to ramp up speed without losing form.



IT'S SUMMER HOLIDAY season and the perfect time to do more walking. Whether sightseeing on foot, enjoying a mindful walk in nature, a family stroll or perhaps more of a fitness walk, you'll benefit from these tips to help you walk more effectively at different paces, all with great posture. You'll enjoy the benefits whatever you are doing.

The right pace will help you achieve specific health goals, change your shape and improve heart health. I'm not asking you to walk at a frantic pace or to stomp at your fastest stride all the time. Whatever your motivation, your body has three natural internal accelerators and these accelerators are crucial to helping you adapt your pace to different situations. And, if you are looking to walk faster,

your accelerators will improve your walking pace to move faster with my WalkActive Technique.

So, however, whenever and wherever you are walking this month and this summer, it's time to make friends with your accelerators – your body will thank you for it!

Happy walking, you lovely people!

Joanna x



TRY THE "HIP OFF"!

If you've ever found yourself walking with someone slower than you and it bothers you, try this fun tip, which can help both of you. It instantly boosts your posture and strengthens your core, while matching your walking pace. I call it a "hip off" – here's what you do:

- Face each other and make a note of where your eye line is as you look at your friend – perhaps level with their eyebrows, for example.
- Now try to extend yourself as tall as possible by drawing in your abs and creating more length between your pubic bone and breastbone.
- Next, reassess where your new eye line is on your friend – maybe level with their hair parting?
- Keep this new eye line position and start your walk. Every now and then check your eye line is still level with this new height. You'll need to use your core to maintain it – so while you are not walking at your normal pace, you'll still be giving yourself posture benefits, strengthening your core as well as safeguarding your joints.

Meet your accelerators!

Your body has three natural accelerators: feet, hips and arms. Here's how to use them...

FEET

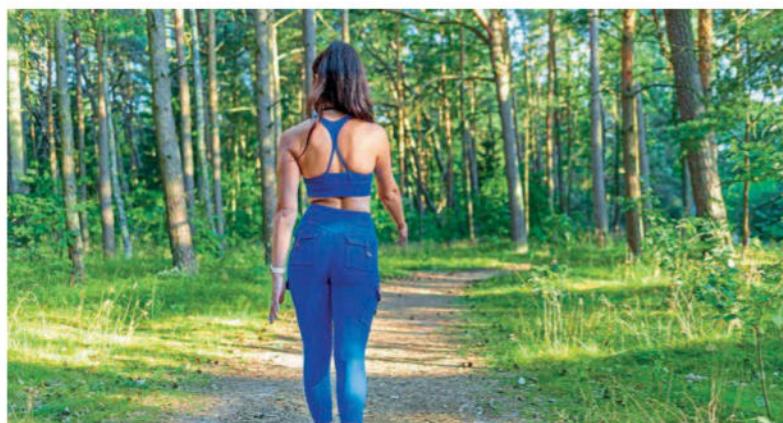
- Push off your toes more – remember it's an even push from the big, middle and little toes, simultaneously.
- Keep your foot on the ground for longer. The more contact there is between the surface of your foot and the ground, the more power you generate to propel yourself forward and this is what makes you go faster.
- Keep rolling through each part of your foot, as this will help maximise the correct muscle recruitment.

HIPS

- You can achieve hip stability with rigidity. A stable pelvis gives your muscles something to push against.
- Imagine a swimmer pushing off the swimming pool wall: if you have something stable to push against, in this case, your hips and the ground, you'll generate more power.
- Maintain space in your hips. If your hips are lifted – as opposed to being slumped – you can move more freely. This allows your thigh to extend further behind you with each stride, propelling you forward more powerfully.

ARMS

- Swing your arms from the shoulders. This helps you improve your posture, as you'll be opening shortened chest muscles that contribute to rounded shoulders which can contribute to a stooped posture, reduced movement patterns and less efficient breathing. These are all important when you want to walk fitter, further and faster!
- Emphasise the back swing rather than the front swing. The more your arms come back, the more your body will move forwards. It may feel awkward having a large front swing and a large back swing, so make the front swing shorter by focusing on coming across the midline of your body.
- Lead from your elbow. If your hand becomes floppy and the lower arm starts to fling, you will miss out on allowing your arm to swing from the shoulder.



Download WalkActive with Joanna Hall (available on Google Play and App store) and sign up for a free mini taster programme to watch Joanna's Makeover Your Walking Mistakes video. Also visit walkactive.com and find Joanna at [instagram.com/walkactivewithjoannahall](https://www.instagram.com/walkactivewithjoannahall).



WALK ACTIVE

TOP BEAUTY

To mark plastic-free July take your pick from our selection of the best no-plastic buys for clear

BLISSFUL BATHING

Everything's eco-friendly at this circular economy beauty company that reuses salvaged natural ingredients to create fabulous skincare.

UpCircle Bath Salts (£19.99, upcirclebeauty.com) are made with Epsom, sea and Himalayan pink salt to cleanse skin and soothe muscles. The incredible scent of orange, lavender and geranium with upcycled rose petals has to be experienced to be believed – it's luscious! Packaging is plastic-free and refillable.



Find out more at plasticfreejuly.org

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. IMAGES: VARIOUS BRANDS.

Biodegradable skin rescue

If you're looking for a skin-soothing multitasker **Green People One Balm** (£22, greenpeople.co.uk) is the perfect rescue remedy. Organic plant oils nourish while maintaining your protective skin barrier. It's scented with sustainably sourced frankincense, myrrh, pomegranate and rosehip to help heal inflamed skin. Use it as a

cleanser, lip balm, cuticle moisturiser or to soften

patches of dry, sore skin. The

pot is 100 per cent biodegradable, meaning

you can put it on your compost heap or into the household waste bin. The cardboard box

is recyclable.



RESURFACED SKIN

Improve skin texture, pigmentation and fine lines with this innovative solid retinoid bar in a beautiful bamboo pot. The **SBRCT Rejuvenating Night Balm** (£40, facethefuture.co.uk) is a potent skin game-changer that encourages cell turnover to reveal clearer skin and stimulates plumping collagen. Contains gentler granactive retinoid at two per cent with anti-inflammatory squalane oil. Warm the bar in your hand, then massage onto your face, especially in areas of pigmentation or lines. Used daily, it'll last 4-6 weeks, then you can buy a refill or re-use the cute pot for something else such as jewellery!

STAY STRONG

For hair that feels fuller and stronger, try **THIX Caffeine Shampoo and Conditioner** (£15 each, thixhair.com). They contain scientifically proven ingredients, such as caffeine and plant-derived keratin, to stimulate hair follicle growth, plus hair health vitamins that include niacinamide, panthenol and vitamin E. The energising mint and eucalyptus-fragranced formulas are free from silicone, ethanol, sulphate, GMOs and are vegan. Fully sustainable, the bottles are made from recycled and recyclable aluminium.



TopSanté PROMOTION

STAY FEELING FRESH!

Try the zero-waste Ben & Anna Cocoa Mania Deodorant Stick (£7.45, benandanna.uk). The must-have stick has a tropical scent of coconut and pineapple that's perfect for summer. Enriched with natural soda, which has a deodorising effect, it will keep you fresh all day, while shea butter leaves your underarm skin soft. Certified natural, vegan and 100 per cent effective against body odour.



CLEAN FROM HEAD TO TOE!

Reduce your plastic use by cleaning your body with **Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Bar Soap** (£6.39, drbronner.co.uk), which is packaged in post-consumer recycled paper.

Plant-based, biodegradable and made with certified organic oils and FairTrade ingredients, the bars create a soft, smooth lather that gently cleans and moisturises you from top to toe. Can also be used for make-up brushes and other home cleaning.



For more beauty content, subscribe to our **FREE** weekly newsletter.

Visit topsante.co.uk and click on Newsletter to sign up!



PLASTIC-FREE HAIRCARE

Award winning **KinKind shampoo and conditioner bars** (from £6.50, kinkind.co.uk) are the plastic-free way to better hair. Such an easy swap too! Now you can do good, feel great and look amazing from the first wash. The conditioner bar was a winner in the *Top Santé Beauty Awards 2022!*

STAINLESS STEEL BOTTLES

Go plastic-free when it comes to drinking with the **Klean Kanteen Reflect Water Bottle** (£29.95, kleankanteen.co.uk). Made from stainless steel, this durable bottle is elegant and sustainable. Stay hydrated in style with the perfect companion for Plastic-Free July!



CALMING BATH AND SHOWER DUO

The **Nereus Calming & Revitalising Luxury Bath & Shower Gel Duo** (£23, nereus.uk) is an exquisite duo that gives you a luxurious bathing experience, leaving you feeling refreshed and revitalised from top to toe. Usually £40, you can now get this set for just £23!

YOUR Summer ESSENTIALS

For Plastic-Free July, go crazy for these gorgeous eco buys...



JUICES FOR GOOD HEALTH

These **Ginger & Turmeric Juice Shots from the ginger people** (£9.95, health stores) are not only super healthy thanks to their 99 per cent Fijian juice but are also better for the environment. By choosing glass bottles with aluminium lids, you're helping reduce plastic waste and promote a more sustainable lifestyle.





AND YOUR WINNERS ARE...

Discover the winners, highly commended and shortlisted products from our 2023 *Top Santé* Haircare Awards!

W WELCOME TO THE 2023 *Top Santé* Haircare Awards! It feels like ages ago that we started the process of opening up entries (back in January I believe!) leading to our trusted panel of testers, all age 40+, putting the shortlisted products to the test across 19 categories (and two reader voted ones). The *Top Santé* Beauty Awards are judged by real women, not industry experts – although we do have a couple of very experienced beauty journos in our midst! Everyone gets at

least a month if not more to test the products and report back, giving us in-depth, real-world reviews and scores based on ease of use, packaging, and overall effectiveness. These results are then collated to come up with our winner and highly commended placements. Thanks to all who entered and took part in the testing – and congratulations to our winners!

Katy x Editor-In-Chief



BEST SHAMPOO FOR FINE/THINNING HAIR

JOINT WINNER

Pharmacers H H-Stimupurin Hair Growth Stimulating Shampoo (£11, escentual.com)

The ingredients in this complex help activate genes responsible for new hair development, boosting existing hair follicles to promote natural growth and extend life span of the hair (the anagen phase). Caffeine helps neutralise the negative effect of androgenic hormones responsible for premature hair loss. It also contains niacinamide, D-panthenol and biotin.

Angela, 44: 'This shampoo has a super-luxe feel on my hair with a deliciously rich and thick formula – it feels like a real treat to use. You leave it on for a couple of minutes so it can work its magic. The formula has some serious science behind it, including natural growth factors, caffeine and biotin, which promise big results with long-term use.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Virtue Flourish Shampoo For Thinning Hair (£40, sephora.co.uk)

This shampoo delicately removes scalp build-up, cleanses the hair shaft, and clears debris from follicles. Powered by two groundbreaking keratin proteins, it cleanses, purifies and enriches your scalp, creating fertile ground for new growth. It's fragranced with a blend of herbs, citrus, flowers and woods aromas for a spa-like experience.

Emma, 47: 'A lovely shampoo with a nice botanical smell, which feels so soft when applying and lathers well. My hair felt thicker after use. Would recommend.'



This formula contains Noughty's own organic garden pea sprout extract known to encourage vitality and healthy hair growth, piroctone olamine to fight dandruff, green Robusta coffee extract to stimulate the scalp, plus a hit of hyaluronic acid to add hydration from root to tip.



SHORTLISTED

Jason Thickening Biotin + Hyaluronic Acid Shampoo (£8.79, jasonnaturalcare.co.uk)

Treat dry, damaged hair and revive lustre with this highly hydrating shampoo infused with hyaluronic acid proven to boost moisture levels and hair-strengthening biotin and panthenol to help boost volume and bring limp, lifeless hair back to life again.



JOINT WINNER

Bondi Boost Thickening Therapy Shampoo (£29.95, bondiboost.co.uk)

Formulated with a proprietary complex of powerful ingredients that work together to lift at the roots, this shampoo also helps plump each strand for instant volume thanks to hyaluronic acid. Vegan-friendly collagen, ginseng, and sea kelp strengthen and nourish, adding shine and gloss.

Charlotte, 45: 'I love the packaging and the pump-style bottle that it comes in, which makes it so easy to use. I can feel the volume in my hair whilst I'm using this shampoo and it is really light, which leaves my hair feeling thick and bouncy. It works especially well when paired with the Bondi Boost conditioner. This is a nice shampoo that does exactly what it says on the label!'



BEST CONDITIONER FOR FINE/ THINNING HAIR

WINNER

**Pharmacaris H
H-Stimulinum Hair
Growth Stimulating
Conditioner (£7.99,
facethefuture.co.uk)**

A unique combination of active ingredients including natural growth factor FGF and caffeine make this conditioner prolong the life cycle of your hair to prevent early loss and thinning. The ingredients promote microcirculation and proper oxygenation of follicles to stimulate production of new hair and accelerate natural growth and thickness. *Angela, 44: 'Just like its companion shampoo, this thickening conditioner is luxurious with lots of top-notch research behind the formula, including growth factors, D-panthenol and biotin. My hair feels in great condition after use.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Virtue Flourish
Conditioner for Thinning
Hair (£42, sephora.co.uk)**

This lightweight hair strengthener, hydrator and detangler is powered by two groundbreaking keratin proteins that cleanse, purify, and enrich the scalp. Each new hair is nourished and strengthened while breakage is reduced. An aromatic blend of herbs, citrus, flowers and wood notes gives it a spa-like scent.

Angela, 44: 'A rich and luxurious formula that leaves my hair feeling thoroughly nourished. Targeted ingredients such as keratins, probiotics and peptides will hopefully give my hair a chance to regrow in the long-term.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Bondi Boost
Thickening Therapy
Conditioner (£29.95,
bondiboost.co.uk)**

Targeting fine, flat and limp hair, this densifying, volumising conditioner is loaded with biotin, vitamin B5 and hyaluronic acid to plump up hair fibres for instant visible volume.

Charlotte, 45: 'I am a big fan of the pump bottle on this conditioner, which makes application really easy. The formula has a delicate but fresh fragrance and is not too thick like some conditioners can be. Due to the texture, my hair is left feeling light and full of volume and looks so much thicker once styled. It's a great product for thickening your hair and I'd recommend it.'



SHORTLISTED

**Monpure
Strengthening
Essence-Conditioner (£36,
monpure.com)**

This ultra-lightweight essence soothes and hydrates scalp and hair, locking in moisture without greasiness or weight. Strengthening vegan silk peptides, argan oil and pro-vitamin B5 leave scalp and hair nourished.



SHORTLISTED

**MONAT IR Clinical
Conditioner (£49,
monatglobal.com/uk)**

A blend of rosemary oil and peppermint fortify weakened hair, defending against loss. It detangles and moisturises thanks to REJUVENIQUE® and CAPIXYL™ along with other key actives.



BEST SHAMPOO FOR AFRO HAIR

WINNER

**UpCircle
Shampoo
Crème with
upcycled Pink
Berry (£19.99,
upcirclebeauty.com)**

This has been tested on afro hair as well as on those who wear a head covering. The concentrated formula gives three times more washes than a liquid. Pink berry decreases scalp soreness, itching and flakes. *Thelma, 50: 'This is a game changer! The cream formula means there is less waste and makes it practical for travelling. It's cost effective as you don't have to use loads. Will buy again.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**L'Oréal Professionnel Curl
Expression Anti-Buildup
Cleansing Jelly Shampoo (£17.20,
sephora.co.uk)**

This clarifying shampoo removes impurities, product build-up and excess oil without drying. *Rudo, 38: 'The hibiscus scent makes hair washing a treat. It lathers instantly and feels very creamy.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Hairstory New Wash
Rich (£44, hairstory.com)**

This detergent-free, sulphate-free wash cleanses and conditions hair, restoring scalp balance without stripping away the natural oils. *Rudo, 38: 'Love the packaging as you can squeeze out every drop so none goes to waste. A little goes a long way.'*



BEST CONDITIONER FOR TEXTURED/AFRO HAIR

WINNER

Healthy Hair Studio by Enitan Inches Conditioned (£36.50, healthyhairstudio.co.uk)



An instant and deep conditioner with conditioning ingredients for moisture longevity, this formula contains ceramides to improve the binding ability of the scales of the cuticle, so hair can endure more wear and tear e.g., twisting and detangling. Also contains chia seed to improve hair texture and urea, a rich humectant

that's ideal for afro-textured hair. *Thelma, 50: 'I would buy this product for myself and my daughter. It's hard to find a good conditioner that works for our thick 4c hair. I also love that it is black-owned and created by a trichologist. You can tell they know their stuff when it comes to conditioning black hair.'*

HIGHLY COMMENDED

L'Oréal Professionnel Curl Expression Hair Rich Mask (£26, sephora.co.uk)



A rich, buttery formula that melts into curls for

intense hydration, this mask helps deeply nourish. Developed by four international curl and coil experts, it is concentrated with glycerin, urea and hibiscus seed extract to condition curls for enhanced manageability and softness. Scented with jasmine, orchid, freesia and cedarwood.

Rudo, 38: 'I do find myself just opening and smelling this product, so they won me over far too easily in the fragrance department! The mask looks and feels good when applied and is enjoyable to use, too.'

BEST SHAMPOO FOR CURLY HAIR

WINNER

L'Oréal Professionnel Curl Expression Moisturising and Hydrating Shampoo (£17.20, sephora.co.uk)



This creamy formula transforms into a rich foam upon contact with water, saturating curls with moisture to help detangle. Developed with international curl and coil experts, the formula is enriched with concentrated actives glycerin, urea H and hibiscus seed extract for weightless, long-lasting hydration. Scented with star jasmine, orchid and freesia.

Eve, 53: 'This shampoo is divine! The toasted caramel scent instantly puts me in a good mood when I open the bottle. The thick and creamy mousse-like texture creates wet-hair volume and makes it easy to give my scalp a thorough massage each wash. After rinsing, my hair feels a lot less tangled than usual, as if it has already been conditioned, which is great! Will look to buy this again when it runs out.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Naturtint Curl Definer Co-Wash Balm (£19.99, naturtint.co.uk)



Cleanse your hair without regular shampooing while giving nourishment and care for curls. This balm conditions and detangles for soft, defined curls without frizz thanks to hydrolysed wheat protein, shea butter, pracaxi seed oil, meadowfoam seed oil and crambe abyssinica.

Sarah, 40: 'I just loved this product for detangling curly hair with ease. It has the consistency of a conditioner but leaves hair feeling as cleansed as after shampooing and is affordable. I really recommend it for those with tighter curls.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Hairstory New Wash Rich (£44, hairstory.com)



For hair that craves more moisture, this detergent-free, creamy moisturising hair wash formula cleanses and

conditions hair, restoring your scalp's natural balance without stripping it of its natural oils or protective barrier. Made with gentle essential oils and naturally derived ingredients, it won't damage your hair or the environment. *Sarah, 40: 'I tried this product on my wavy hair and my daughter's curly hair, and the results were beyond impressive! My waves were perfectly formed, while my daughter had beautiful ringlet curls. The key is to follow the instructions: comb it through before rinsing and don't overdo it. It's free from chemical nasties such as harsh foams and detergents.'*

SHORTLISTED

Umberto Giannini Curl Jelly Wash Sulphate Free Shampoo (£8.95, umbertogiannini.com)



This gentle sulphate-free shampoo will cleanse all types of curls without stripping, leaving hair feeling bouncy, light and defined. Safe for coloured, chemically treated, relaxed hair and hair extensions. With vitamin B5 to strengthen and nourish hair follicles.

BEST CONDITIONER FOR CURLY HAIR

WINNER

Watermans Masque Me (£22.50, watermanshair.com)

The world's first eight-in-one hair masque designed to nourish, repair, hydrate, and protect hair is formulated with Watermans' Hair Growth technology and a blend of vitamins and antioxidants such as vitamins E, C, B3, B5 and B6, rosemary extract, argan oil, lupine and caffeine. Masque Me will help improve the texture shine and gloss of your hair.

Yvonne, 57: 'Someone commented on how good my hair looked after I used this product. And in fact, it was the best it had looked for some time! When I use it, my curls are defined, bouncy and free from frizz. I'll be buying this when it runs out!'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Naturtint Curl Definer Leave-In Conditioner (£15.99, naturtint.co.uk)

This conditioner blends the proactive treatment with hydrolysed wheat protein that penetrates deep into the hair fibre to repair and protect from within, reducing breakage. Jojoba, mimosa, and sunflower vegetable waxes provide softness and nourishment, whilst also helping distribute the product, praand caxi seed oil provide shine and softness.

Sarah, 40: 'A great product for frizzy locks, this leave-in conditioner has become a regular part of our routine that's ideal when used in combination with the Naturtint Curl Definer Co-Wash Balm, or between



washes to restore curl formation. A little goes a long way, but my hair looks so much healthier after use.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Hairstory Hair Balm (£39, uk.hairstory.com)

This lightweight cream adds moisture, helps define curls, and revives over-processed hair without making it crunchy or sticky. If you don't have the time or patience to blow dry your hair each day, this product is for you! Simply work it through your hair and walk out the door.

Sarah, 48: 'This light, fresh product is like a leave-in conditioner and styling product in one. It's easy to apply, not sticky, and leaves perfect moisturised curls. Its air-drying so no need to diffuse, and creates soft bouncy curls that last for days.'



SHORTLISTED

Umberto Giannini Curl Jelly Care De-Frizz Conditioner (£8.95, umbertogiannini.com)

For all types of waves, curls and coils, this moisturising conditioner smooths, detangles, de-frizzes and seals in shine. It coats each strand with weightless conditioning, enhancing the shape of every curl. Safe for coloured, chemically treated, relaxed hair and hair extensions.



SHORTLISTED

Young Living Mirah Lustrous Hair Oil (£33.79, youngliving.com/en_gb)

This luxurious, multitasking treat for your hair is formulated to keep your locks soft and shiny, no matter what your hair type. This lightweight hair oil is infused with essential oils and contains hydrating argan, Monoi and Abyssinian oils, fatty acids, and vitamin E.



BEST SHAMPOO FOR DRY HAIR

WINNER

athletia Scalp Care Shampoo (£32, athletia-beauty.co.uk)

Free from sulphates and silicone, this shampoo gently cleanses the scalp using amino acid-based cleansers to create a rich creamy lather that removes impurities and excess sebum to leave the scalp fresh. The 100 per cent natural aroma comes from botanical essential oils including lemon, ginger, eucalyptus and cedarwood.

Victoria, 47: 'A clear winner with its forest-fresh fragrance and packed with botanical extracts, this leaves my scalp feeling revitalised, fresh, tingly, and squeaky clean! I love the ethos of this brand, which focuses on nourishing scalp health to grow healthy hair! A little goes a long way too.'



incredible repairing properties of L'Occitane's liquid shampoo but in a more sustainable, plastic-free format. With five essential oils of angelica, ylang-ylang, sweet orange, lavender and geranium, plus sunflower oil and oat amino acids, the shampoo intensely nourishes damaged hair, repairing split ends and creating shine.



Jo, 44: 'This eco-friendly shampoo bar glides over hair, works into a creamy foam quickly and rinses out easily. It leaves my hair feeling clean, bouncy, stronger and deeply hydrated without weighing it down. I love the uplifting, slightly musky plant-powered scent.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Fudge Professional Damage Rewind Reconstruction Shampoo (£10.30, amazon.co.uk)

This shampoo helps make your hair up to 95 per cent stronger, with repairing Opti-PLEX™ technology that penetrates deep into the hair shaft to reconstruct bonds after chemical, colour, styling and environmental damage, as well as weightlessly smoothing the cuticle.

Claire, 44: 'This smells divine and more expensive than it is – like an in-salon shampoo. My hair feels stronger after a week of use and it doesn't irritate my scalp. My hair feels very clean after using it and the bottle is a generous size so should last a long time as you only need a small amount. Well done, Fudge!'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

L'Occitane Intensive Repair Solid Shampoo (£10.50, uk.occitane.com)

This bar shampoo contains all the

SHORTLISTED

Young Living Copaiba Vanilla Shampoo (£32.53, youngliving.com/en_gb)

This shampoo contains moisturising, plant-derived ingredients, including a blend of 10 essential oils to help dry or damaged hair. Scented with the warm, woody aroma of Copaiba premium essential oil, the shampoo will leave your hair clean, soft and hydrated from root to tip.



SHORTLISTED

Acala Camelia, Kokum and Lemon Conditioning Shampoo Bar (£9.99, acalaonline.com)

This zero-waste, Sicilian lemon-scented bar is great for hair that needs extra nourishment, offering the multiple benefits of camellia seed, kokum butter, carrot protein and panthenol to not only cleanse, but also condition hair.



BEST CONDITIONER FOR DRY HAIR

WINNER

Fudge Professional Damage Rewind Conditioner (£9.30, uk.fudgeprofessional.com)

Stop damage in its tracks with this strengthening conditioner containing Opti-PLEX™ technology that reconstructs bonds, while HairGuard™ technology targets cuticles and seals them shut in just one wash. Colour is locked from fading for 33 washes and hair is 95 per cent stronger and eight times smoother with double the softness. *Charlotte, 49: 'My weak, brittle, perimenopausal hair feels healthier and more resilient after using this strengthening conditioner – I will definitely buy again. Now I can carry on highlighting my hair without worrying about the damage.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

L'Oréal Professionnel Série Expert Absolut Repair Gold Conditioner (£16.85, sephora.co.uk)

This resurfacing treatment transforms damaged and chemically treated tresses to reveal sleek, soft, healthy-looking hair. Supercharged with Série Expert's restorative gold quinoa + protein power-mix, the nourishing conditioner replenishes dry lengths with a mega-dose of moisture, while leaving a lightweight touch. It helps to enhance elasticity too. *Claire, 44: 'I love this conditioner. It has a rich and creamy consistency, feels very nourishing for my poor hair that gets taken swimming a lot! It has a citrusy smell that makes it feel like a salon'*



treatment but at home. It leaves my hair soft and shiny with no flyaways. I will be buying it again!

HIGHLY COMMENDED

L'Oréal Professionnel Curl Expression Hair Mask (£26.30, sephora.co.uk)

This nourishing mask detangles the hair to promote a smooth texture and natural feel. Infused with a vitamin-rich blend of hibiscus seed, glycerin 2.5 per cent and urea H, the potent formula offers a unique balm texture that effortlessly melts into the hair to deliver long-lasting moisture.

Victoria, 47: 'Finally, I have found the hair mask of my dreams! This luxurious mask melts into hair giving high shine and a velvety feel. I have naturally dry, curly, coloured hair that puts up with a lot of heat – this mask was made for hair like mine as it really helps hair regain its strength. I will be going back for more!'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

OSMO Wonder 10 Conditioner (£14.99, sallybeauty.co.uk)

This product is an intensely hydrating treatment with 10 benefits designed to help nourish and protect dry and damaged hair from roots to ends.

Formulated with Fibre Bond Technology to strengthen and repair hair, the weightless formula delivers incredible natural volume and shine with every application.

Jo, 44: 'Absolutely my favourite conditioner! The lightweight formula transforms my long, colour-treated locks from scraggy to silky perfection, and the scent lasts for days. Styling is much easier and I can't stop stroking and smelling my hair after use.'



BEST SHAMPOO FOR COLOURED HAIR

WINNER

L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Metal Detox Anti-Metal Cleansing Cream (£26, sephora.co.uk)

Co-developed with professional hair experts, this award-winning formula brightens and protects colour-treated hair. The sulphate-free shampoo cleanses hair and scalp, removing water-induced copper deposits that can affect vibrancy. It envelops hair in a rich lather, promoting longer-lasting colour with a glossy, high shine finish.

Helen, 41: 'I am so impressed with this. It has a rich consistency, lathers well and feels like luxurious on my blonde, highlighted hair that's prone to dryness and breakage. My hair is now extremely smooth and manageable so I will definitely continue to use this.'



Sally, 75: 'I like this product very much. It applies easily, with a silky and creamy texture. It smells very nice too and I think it makes my hair look blonder even though I am due a trip to the hairdressers!'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Provoke Blonde Rehab Strengthening Shampoo No 2 (£4.99, boots.com)

This sulphate-free shampoo cleanses, reduces breakage and minimises frizz. For blonde hair that's naturally thinner and more fragile, the formula is enriched with keratin, hyaluronic acid and ProCutigen, which repairs and protects damaged bonds, helping rebuild hair from the inside out.

Natalie, 44: 'The scent is fresh, clean and not overpowering or artificial. I've noticed a difference in the overall health and strength of my hair, too.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

OSMO Chromaplex Bond Shampoo (£10.99, sallybeauty.co.uk)

For in-the-know salon goers, OSMO Chromaplex™ is an innovative in-salon treatment that transforms colour-treated hair by strengthening and restructuring hair bonds, helping build elasticity while repairing damage. Hair is strengthened and restored throughout for soft-feeling and radiant results.



SHORTLISTED

Hairstory New Wash (£44, hairstory.com)

This detergent-free, sulfate-free wash is a shampoo alternative that cleans and conditions. It's made with gentle essential oils and naturally derived ingredients that won't damage your hair or the environment. Fantastic for colour preservation.





BEST CONDITIONER FOR COLOURED HAIR

WINNER

L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Metal Detox Anti-Deposit Protector Mask
(£26, sephora.co.uk)



Protect your colour or balayage with this innovative lightweight hair mask suitable for all types of coloured hair. The professional formula helps protect against copper deposits found in shower water, which can damage or discolour, purifying hair to help enhance vibrancy, while promoting luxurious softness and shine.

Helen, 41: 'I am very pleased with this as the ease of application is great and the packaging is well designed. The consistency is thick and rich, which gives it a luxurious feel. It makes my hair feel extremely soft and nourished. Since using it, people have commented that my hair looks shiny, and I can feel a clear difference in the condition.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Fudge Professional Clean Blonde Damage Rewind Treatment (£11.30, amazon.co.uk)

Lessen the look of brassy tones with this intensive treatment that works to minimise the appearance of yellow hues, while a boost of Opti-PLEX™ drenches your locks in hydration. Dryness and the effects of chemical damage are reduced, as an enviable gloss is summoned. Finished with Fragrance Fuse technology that imparts a tantalising, long-lasting aroma.

Sally, 75: 'I love this product. I have used purple treatments in the past, which have left my hair looking grey, but this is amazing. It makes my hair look a lighter, brighter blonde. I went shopping with my daughter and she immediately commented on how great my hair looked.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

OSMO Chromaplex Bond Conditioner (£14.99, sallybeauty.co.uk)

OSMO Chromaplex™ is an innovative in-salon treatment that transforms colour-treated hair by strengthening



and restructuring hair bonds. Find it in this at-home conditioner that strengthens, protects and prolongs colour longevity. Sunflower seed extract and argan oil help prolong the life of colour while protecting against pollutants.

Natalie, 44: 'My hair feels super soft and shiny when using this product. It also smells amazing. I will definitely be buying this again when the awards sample runs out!'



SHORTLISTED

Provoke Blonde Rehab Strengthening Conditioner No 3
(£4.99, boots.com)

Specifically designed for blonde hair structures that are naturally thinner and more fragile, this nourishing formula includes keratin, hyaluronic acid, and ProCutigen, which acts like a charged "rod" sitting between the fibrils in the hair's cuticle, bonding them together.



BEST SHAMPOO FOR SILVER/GREY HAIR



WINNER

Silvina London Everyday Grey Hair Shine Shampoo (£22, silvinalondon.com)

With more than 93 per cent naturally derived ingredients, this shampoo helps soften while adding shine. The blue pigments come from maltodextrin (a natural starch derivative) and gardenia florida fruit extract, to prevent brassy tones. Can be used on every wash, with no risk of hair turning blue. It also produces a silky-feel lather for an effective cleansing.

Tracey, 62: 'A small amount lathers well into a luxurious foam even on the first wash. My hair feels exceptionally clean, soft and smooth as well as completely manageable and tangle free. I can easily go conditioner free too! It helps my hair looks bright and shiny but doesn't alter the colour, which is a bonus. Hair is left with added body and bounce.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Charles Worthington ColourPlex Glowing Grey Shampoo (£8.99, boots.com)

Enhance the beauty of your naturally grey locks by leaving it with a sparkling silver shine. Enriched with salon strength pigments, this shampoo neutralises yellow tones to transform dull hair, leaving it brighter than ever with a radiant shine. Hair is deeply moisturised and nourished, feeling silky soft and smoother after only one wash.

June, 72: 'This rich grey/blue-coloured shampoo lathers well and is easy to use. It also comes with clear instructions on how to use it. It contains natural, vegan ingredients, which I like. My hair feels in very good condition now – very nourished and shiny and with plenty of volume so I'll use again.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Alfaparf Milano Professional Semi diLino Blonde Anti-Yellow Low Shampoo (£16.35, justmylook.com)

This shampoo gently cleanses and neutralises yellow tones in natural or colour-treated silver locks thanks to a Shine Fix Complex ensuring 24-hour gloss from root to end, plus Urban Defence Pro – an anti-pollution shield for total protection. The result? Neutralised yellow tones after first application and three times smoother and more manageable hair. Vegan friendly.

Tracey, 62: 'This light purple, sulphate-free shampoo works up into a luxurious, rich lather. The slightly floral fragrance lingers on my hair after washing. The natural ingredients cleanse and nourish my hair leaving it feeling soft and manageable. After blow-drying, my hair has lots of body and bounce. I could easily use this every day – for ever more! The bottle is a great shape to use in the shower, too.'



SHORTLISTED

L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Silver Shampoo (£14.85, lsephora.co.uk)

This shampoo features magnesium to help combat yellow tones. The purple shampoo creates a gentle lather with expert toning properties to help neutralise brassiness and protect the hair fibres while giving revitalised, healthy-looking colour.



SHORTLISTED

Pharmacaris H H-Stimutone (£11.50, aromorfia.co.uk)

This helps counteract

greying and hair loss that's genetic as well as environmental i.e. caused by stress, poor diet and/or pollution. The shampoo cleanses the scalp and improves hair condition with caffeine and natural growth factor FGF complex, which strengthens follicles.



SHORTLISTED

Fudge Professional Clean Blonde Damage Rewind Shampoo (£13.20, amazon.co.uk)

This shampoo contains Fudge's salon-strength purple micro-pigments that knock out brassy tones, whilst the Opti-PLEX™ technology penetrates into the hair's core to reconstruct bonds after chemical styling and environmental damage.



BEST CONDITIONER FOR SILVER/GREY HAIR

WINNER

Silvina London Grey Hair Hydration and Smoothing Conditioner (£22, silvinalondon.com)

With more than 92 per cent naturally derived ingredients, this conditioner helps hydrate and soften grey hair. Black oat seed extract makes hair easier to comb, while coconut oil protects and repairs. Babassu oil and organic aloe vera add gloss and soothe the scalp, as well as reducing breakage.

Hilary, 67: 'I really enjoy using this product. It leaves my hair feeling smooth and luxuriant. It's easy to apply and I will certainly be using it all up!'



Tone and nourish grey, silver and platinum hair with this conditioner infused with violet and blue pigments to counteract and neutralise brassy, yellow or orange tones. The lightweight formula conditions hair to deliver a healthy shine without weighing it down. Helps maintain your light blonde or silver hair between salon visits.

June, 72: 'This has a rich purple colour, is very creamy and has a lovely smell. The condition of my hair after use is very shiny with no yellow tones. It also doesn't leave a purple hue on my hair. Will use this again.'



This detangles hair and neutralises unwanted yellow tones, revitalising and moisturising without adding weight. The product contains key active ingredients including Shine Fix Complex ensuring 24-hour gloss from root to end; and Urban Defence Pro is an anti-pollution shield for total protection.

Tracey, 62: 'This light purple conditioner has a beautiful fragrance that lingers even after blow-drying. My hair is silky soft afterwards and it isn't weighed down. I love how much volume, body and bounce my hair has! Also, my locks stay clean for longer and the body and bounce lasts for three days! The tube is easy to use with clear instructions and is a slightly smaller size to the shampoo to avoid waste. The packaging can be recycled as well.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Silver Conditioner (£16.85, sephora.co.uk)

HIGHLY COMMENDED

ALFAPARF Milano Professional Semi diLino Blonde Anti-Yellow Conditioner (£16.35, justmylook.com)

BEST CONDITIONING MASK FOR COARSE HAIR

WINNER

L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Absolut Repair Golden Mask (£22.85, sephora.co.uk)

Give stressed hair some support with this lightweight mask that helps chemically treated tresses look sleek, soft and healthy. Supercharged with Serié Expert's restorative Gold Quinoa + Protein power-mix, the nourishing formula replenishes dry, thirsty lengths and enhances elasticity and strength to leave you with a healthy-looking and luminous mane.

Georgie, 42: 'This has a gorgeous salon-worthy scent. The thick and creamy texture contains a touch of shimmer. It goes on easily and works in an absolute treat. My hair tends to go wiry quickly, but it remained frizz-free for several days after use!'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Noughty Wave Hello Curl Butter 3-in-1 treatment (£9.99, lovenoughty.co.uk)

Wave hello to nourished, stronger curls and coils with this three-in-one heavy hitting hair butter designed to work as a conditioner, mask and/or leave-in treatment. It provides intense hydration for curly and textured hair to improve hair's strength, elasticity, and resistance.

Hannah, 40: 'This leaves my hair feeling and looking clean and healthy. My naturally thick, wavy tresses are easy to style whereas other conditioners I've used tend to weigh it down. It's versatile too – it's a conditioner for when I'm in a rush and a hair mask when I have more time.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Seoulista Glossy Locks® Hair Mask (£12, seoulistabeauty.com)

This contains Lipoplex™ – a unique complex that protects and soothes with a concentrated fusion of antioxidant pomegranate, blueberry and rice bran. Nourishing camellia oil, argan oil and hydrolysed keratin help condition hair while improving texture, elasticity and shine. Hydrating hyaluronic acid helps to lock in moisture, restoring damaged hair to its former glory.

Jackie, 51: 'I really enjoy using this product as it's easy to use and works well on my dry hair. It hydrates and leaves my locks with a nice softness and shine. I will be buying this again.'





BEST CONDITIONING MASK FOR FINE HAIR

WINNER

**L'Oréal
Professionnel
Serie Expert
Inforcer Masque
(£22.85,
sephora.co.uk)**



Utilising a strengthening blend of vitamin B6 and biotin, this creamy mask envelopes hair with moisture and nutrients, seeking to impart a soft texture and minimising the appearance of split ends. Perfect for long hair in need of a boost, it improves manageability, resilience, and lustre for healthier looking locks.

Vanessa, 56: 'I see an immediate difference with this beautiful hair masque. The texture of my hair has completely changed: it feels shiny, stronger, more robust, healthier, squeaky clean, and has more body. I will definitely buy again. The scent is lovely too, which my daughter commented upon – before stealing it for herself!'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Hair Proud Clean &
Strong Pre-Cleanse Hair
Mask (£7.95,
iamproud.com)**



This pre-cleanse mask is the first step towards stronger, more hydrated, healthier hair. Once applied, hair is stripped of unwanted product build-up whilst individual hair strands are targeted with next-level moisture, nutrients, and protection from daily stressors, whilst boosting shine from the inside out.

Charlotte, 45: 'I love this! As a swimming teacher, my hair can become quite dry, but this mask gives my hair a new lease of life. I love that you apply it before you wash your hair, and it smells amazing. It leaves my hair moisturised, fuller and healthier. Can't wait to use it again!'

HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Bondi Boost
Miracle Mask
(£25.95,
boots.com)**



Developed for thinning hair, this mask promotes thicker, healthier, fuller-looking hair. It's packed with argan oil, Abyssinian oil, macadamia, castor oil and jojoba oil as well as a complex blend of Redensyl® and Procapil® to defend against hair loss and support healthy hair growth. To be used once a week after shampooing and in place of conditioner.

Angela, 44: 'Relaxing with the mask on for the required 15 minutes really gives the product a chance to penetrate my hair strands, leaving me with smooth and moisturised tresses that now look in better condition. It has a temptingly sweet scent too!'

BEST SCALP TREATMENT FOR FINE HAIR

WINNER

Hair Gain Nourishing Miracle Treatment Mask (£32.99, hairgainnow.com)

A luxurious mask that has been scientifically formulated to provide deep nourishment and hydration, helping to promote fuller, thicker, stronger hair. This restorative formula helps to nurture and revitalise the scalp, leading to reduced hair loss, improved hair quality and increased lustre and shine. *Sophia, 52: 'I'd buy this product as it has an amazing texture, leaves my hair feeling silky soft and also enhances the colour. Several of my friends have commented on the appearance of my hair and how healthy it looks.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Fable & Mane SahaScalp Amla Soothing Serum (£32, cultbeauty.co.uk)

A root-to-tip nourishing elixir, this serum nourishes hair, clears product build-up from the scalp, softens strands, smooths cuticles, adds shine, and protects from further breakage, all with a delicious scent that instils a sense of peace and calm – think ripe blackcurrant with tea rose and fresh orange blossom on a bed of amber and musk! *Joanne, 53: 'This has a delightful floral/herbal fragrance. The pipet helps with the ease of application of the lightweight serum, which absorbs well. I wash my hair the following morning after use, and once dry, it is lovely and smooth.'*



HIGHLY COMMENDED

MONPURE London Follicle Boost Hair Density Serum (£83, monpure.com)

This works to stimulate the scalp, improve cell turnover, and help prevent hair loss and thinning while promoting thicker, fuller hair growth. Contains a pumpkin seed extract proven to help block the enzyme 5-alpha reductase, which produces DHT that causes hair loss. Retinol and lactic acid work to improve cell turnover and remove dead skin and debris. *Polly, 40: 'I have very thin hair at my temples that seems to break or not be happy growing beyond an inch. I put this down to having children and wearing my hair up too often. This product has been the biggest transformer for me in a long list of products I've tried. It has a light texture and a watery almost minty fragrance that isn't detectable after application. It dries well and doesn't leave residue. I could see results within two weeks and will absolutely use this again.'*



SHORTLISTED

Young Living Rosemary Oil (£22.66, youngliving.com/en_gb)

Rosemary essential oil promotes soft and moisturised hair as well as stimulating growth. When massaged in, it creates a warm feeling that helps support healthy circulation, which allows follicles to thrive. Can be used as a scalp treatment once a week.



SHORTLISTED

Watermans Grow More® Elixir (£25.50, watermanshair.com)

This leave-on scalp treatment is specially formulated with a powerful blend of rosemary, biotin, niacinamide, allantoin, lupine protein, silica, cotton seed, azalea extract, as well as vitamins B3, B6, B7, E, and H. These work together to thicken, lift, and strengthen roots.





BEST SCALP TREATMENT FOR OILY HAIR

WINNER

athletia Scalp & Hair Treatment (£35, athletia-beauty.co.uk)

The perfect texture for massages and boosting blood circulation, this rich, thick cream stays in contact with the hair and scalp to reduce friction stress, moisturise dry hair and soothe the scalp. With a 100 per cent natural aroma from botanical essential oils including lemon, ginger, and eucalyptus.

Jo, 44: 'Massaging this rich and luxurious treatment into my scalp and hair is an utter delight. A little goes a long way, too. It completely retextures my roots, leaving them feeling lightweight, volumised, and noticeably grease-free and flake-free for five days.'



help soothe irritated scalps. The plant power in Care Taker Scalp Relief Mask includes oatmeal extract to help calm and relieve the itch, black coffee extract to provide a stimulation, and anti-irritant, calming and soothing bisabolol to relieve irritated skin and scalp.

Helen, 40: 'This has a lightweight, creamy texture with a subtle, soothing aroma. It massages into my scalp well with a nice lather and rinses off equally well.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

HELLO KLEAN Clarifying Scalp Soak (£25, cultbeauty.co.uk)

Clinically proven to remove the big three causes of build-up: hard water, product build-up, and everyday pollution, this low-foam formula gently soaks away dirt without stripping your scalp. It tackles hard water with a powerful blend of apple cider vinegar and phytic acid. The pH 4.0 restores the scalp's natural acidic balance.

Alice, 45: 'This product is brilliant at cleaning your scalp and hair. It contains apple cider vinegar and fermented rice water, which does a great job. I will be buying this again and look forward to trying the rest of the HELLO KLEAN range.'



SHORTLISTED

Pharmacers H H-Stimupeel Trichology Cleansing Peel (£15, facethefuture.co.uk)

This trichology peel unclogs follicles to restore physiological balance to the scalp, which is the first step to reducing hair loss and dandruff. Caffeine improves microcirculation, boosts oxygen supply to cells, and stimulates collagen synthesis, strengthening each hair root.



SHORTLISTED

Fable & Mane SahaScalp Cooling Scalp Mud Mask (£30, cultbeauty.co.uk)

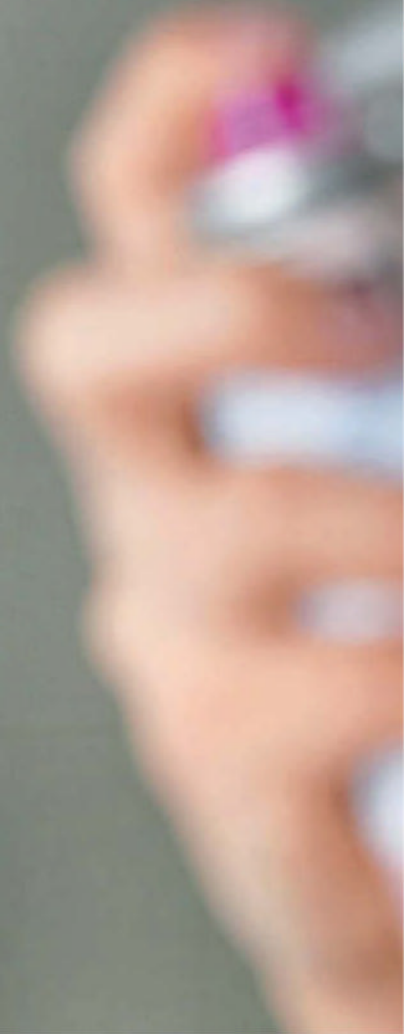
With sea silt, menthol and neem leaf, this mud has antiseptic, antifungal, and purifying properties to soothe, relieve flakiness and strengthen. The lightweight, spa-like treatment leaves scalps feeling cool and offers a long-term solution to any irritation.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Noughty Care Taker Scalp Relief Mask (£9.99, lovenoughty.co.uk)

Carefully curated natural ingredients



BEST DRY SHAMPOO

WINNER

Fudge Professional Dry Shampoo (£10, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk))

Prolong your style between washes with this lightweight dry shampoo. The hair remedy mists on effortlessly and invisibly, meaning it won't deposit a chalky white residue. The revitalising formula utilises the benefits of rose clay to absorb excess oils, promoting cleaner-looking tresses.

Sarah, 43: 'Really happy with this as it absorb the grease without making my hair feel dull and flat. It smells nice and is easy to use. No white residue is left on my dark hair and my hair looks and feels better after use and lasts all day. I highly recommend it.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Batiste Naturally Dry Shampoo Green Tea & Chamomile (£4.25, [boots.com](https://www.boots.com))

Naturally refresh hair with green tea and chamomile extracts and a light scent! Give hair a spritz between washes to gently remove excess oil and instantly restore movement. The can uses 40 per cent less packaging, meaning you lower your environmental impact.

Charlotte, 45: 'I love this product. The scent is light but natural and leaves my hair feeling light, refreshed and easy to style. This has broken my habit of washing my hair every day and I will recommend it to all my friends.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

MONAT The Champ Conditioning Dry Shampoo (£40, [monatglobal.com/uk](https://www.monatglobal.com/uk))

This product is a waterless shampoo that absorbs oils, dirt and impurities in between washes thanks to micro-fine rice starch, letting you extend your style on non-shampoo days. It's great for all hair types and textures, safe for colour-treated hair, hypoallergenic, and dermatologically tested.

Nelly, 40: 'I could rave about this product all day. It is the most advanced dry shampoo I've ever used. My hair feels cleaner and shinier than after a posh blow dry, and the can itself is sleek and looks great on my shelf.'





BEST VOLUMISER

WINNER

Jerome Russell Bstyled Root Boost Spray (£6.99, bblondehair.co.uk)

Give your hair targeted volume from the root and enviable thickness for a strong hold that lasts all day. The non-sticky, lightweight formula leaves no product build-up for soft, touchable locks. Infused with ingredients to nourish hair whilst delivering natural definition and an effortless finish.

Alice, 45: 'This little, unassuming bottle pleasantly surprised me. It is easy to spray onto roots. After flipping my head upside down and blow drying for a few minutes, the root lift volumising effect is fantastic. I will be buying this again.'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Fudge Professional XXL Hair Thickener (£9, amazon.co.uk)

This transforms hair in an instant for those with finer locks. Heat-activated plumping polymers bond to each hair strand and expand them to instantly create a fuller and thicker looking head of hair once you blow dry. Strengthening polymers also provide thermal protection to help protect and shield fragile hair.

Emma, 47: 'This has a beautiful coconut scent. You don't need much at all, which means the tube will last a while. I like the idea that it is heat activated, so when I'm drying my hair, it feels as though it's somehow getting plumper. My hair feels soft and slightly thicker after use.'



SHORTLISTED

L'Oreal Professionnel Techni.Art Morning After Dust Invisible Dry Shampoo (£14.70, sephora.co.uk)

This dry shampoo leaves no visible white residue after brushing out, gives 24-hour encapsulated fragrance, and no-alcohol. The salon formulation works on any hair type, bringing it back to life.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Batiste Dry Shampoo & Volume (£4.25, boots.com)

Instantly refresh your hair and add volume, body and texture with this dry shampoo. It's the perfect quick fix for great-looking hair between washes. Shake well, hold the can 30cm away from your head and spray at roots; give it a quick massage and brush through to refresh and volumise. No water required!

Libby, 60: 'This really works! The scent is gorgeous and it adds volume. Plus I can brush it through my hair with ease. It's perfect for the days when I don't have the time or energy to wash and blow dry.'



SHORTLISTED

Hairstory Powder (£39, hairstory.com)

This natural, translucent talc-free and aerosol-free, volumising dry shampoo powder absorbs oil while instantly creating body, extending the life of a blowout, adding texture to braids, and helping updos to hold.



BEST HAIR GADGET

WINNER

Panasonic EH-HS0E Nanoe™ Hair Straightener (£199.99, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk),

These straighteners feature even heat distribution plates and nanoe™ technology that draws moisture from the air to create tiny, atomised water particles that penetrate hair to help retain moisture, reduce frizz and create shine. Advanced 3D flexible floating ceramic plates move in multiple directions to press hair evenly with less gapping and for smoother gliding.

Katy, 44: 'These give me super sleek and straight hair in just a few glides. My new fave straighteners!'



HIGHLY COMMENDED

mdlondon BLOW (£195, [mdlondon.co.uk](https://www.mdlondon.co.uk))

BLOW is a compact, light, powerful hair dryer that rivals the most well-known on the market. Built to last like a pro would demand, but for everyone, BLOW is compact but robust. At just 372g it's the first full-size pro-dryer that can travel.

Katy, 44: 'This is so much smaller than other hairdryers I've used. Took me a while to get used to it taking a few seconds to turn off, but great for holidays and love the magnetic attachments.'



hair, which I usually straighten as I've found hairdryer diffuser attachments too wieldy in the past – you have to contort your arm and wrist to get them at the right angle! But this genius device you like a cup – no twisting the wrists – plus it's super light. I'll be wearing curls more often thanks to this!



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Bellissima Diffon Supreme (£129.99, [sephora.co.uk](https://www.sephora.co.uk))

Get soft and defined curls, with faster drying times. The perforated grid distributes air evenly, and the 12 fingers with silicon tips keep curls in shape, gently drying while maintaining and enhancing the shape and elasticity of the curls.

Katy, 44: 'I have naturally curly/frizzy



SHORTLISTED

L'Oréal Professionnel SteamPod 4 (£299, [lorealprofessionnel.co.uk](https://www.lorealprofessionnel.co.uk))

Offering a continuous flow of high-pressure steam, these straighteners can create a variety of finishes while offering up to 80 per cent less damage to help maintain hair health.

SHORTLISTED

Revamp Progloss Hollywood Curl Automatic Rotating Hair Curler (£89.99, [revamphair.com](https://www.revamphair.com))

This unique curler features automatic rotation for tangle-free curls at the

touch of a button, with right and left rotation for styling each side.

SHORTLISTED

Bellissima Air Wonder 8 in 1 Hot Air Styler (£99.99, [bellissimaitalia.co.uk](https://www.bellissimaitalia.co.uk))

This eight-in-one system dries, adds volume and creates straight, curly and wavy looks whenever you want!



READERS CHOICE: FAVOURITE HAIRCARE BRAND

Thank you to everyone who voted on our website for their favourite haircare brands! Congratulations go to:

WINNER: Monat

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
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TOP FOOD & DRINK

Enjoy the best new jams, soups, plant-based chocolate and vegan cookbooks for a tasty August!

SUPER SOUP VITAMIN HIT

Say hello to a healthy lunch on-the-go, with **RE:NOURISH Tomato, Red Pepper & Cucumber Gazpacho Soup** (£2.95, renourish.co.uk). It's made from whole fresh veggies – not pasteurised – plus it has no artificial preservatives or added sugar. Juicy fresh tomatoes and red peppers, spiked with cooling cucumber, provide high levels of vitamins C, A and E. So, it's a good-for-you summer fast-food lunch that you drink straight from the bottle. Surprisingly filling at just 197 calories per 500mg, pair it with a wholemeal roll or a handful of nuts. Delicious. Available at Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Ocado, Amazon Fresh and Zapp.



BEST OF BRITISH

Perfect for summer celebrations, a chilled glass of **Folc Dry English Rosé** (£19.99, drinkfolc.com) will get your garden party going. It is, after all, apparently named after the Old English word for 'tribe' or 'family'. With tempting aromas of strawberries, peach and raspberries, it's crisp and clean on the palate and balanced by floral and creamy notes. The packaging is biodegradable, recycled or recyclable. Buy a bottle from Corkk, Marlo wine, The English Vine or Vinvm.



JUICY JAM

Most jams contain more sugar than fruit but **Fearne & Rosie Reduced Sugar Jams** (£3.20, fearneandrosie.co.uk) turn this around by packing in a whoppingly juicy 70 per cent fruit and 40 per cent less sugar than the average jar of jam. The result? Intense fruit flavour without the huge sugar spike. Choose from: Strawberry, with an impressive 31 strawberries per 320g pot; Blackcurrant; Strawberry Super Berry with blueberries, blackcurrants and strawberries; or the totally luscious Cherry flavour with 40 cherries per pot. Find it in Ocado, Waitrose and select Morrisons stores.



New food read

BOSH! MEAT: Over 100 Outrageously Tasty Recipes, by Henry Firth and Ian Theasby (£22, **HQ HarperCollins**). If you love the taste and texture of meat but don't want to eat it, this one's for you. The future of meat is plants, say the authors, who are founders of BOSH! (bosh.tv), an online vegan recipe channel. In this new cookbook, you'll find complex, savoury, meaty flavours without using any animals. From aromatic Thai Mock Duck Curry, to BBQ Smash Burgers and Crispy Korean-Style 'Chicken' Wings, there's dinner party dishes, quick lunch ideas and sweet treats. It's big-on-flavour, vegan-friendly food!



HEAVEN-SENT SNACK

Vegan chocolate bars **Pure Heavenly Chocolate** (from £3.95, pureheavenly.com) are low in sugar and free from common allergens such as dairy, gluten, wheat, soy and GMOs, as well as palm oil. Choose from 16 flavours, including Orange, Mint, Salted Caramel and Coconut, as well as dark, white and "silk" versions. Absolutely scrumptious!

Sign up to the **FREE Top Santé** newsletter at topsante.co.uk/newsletter for weekly health and food inspiration!



PAULINE COX - PHOTOGRAPHS; LUKE ALBERT FOR RECIPE; SUZY BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PIC OF PAULINE.



BALANCE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

Women's health specialist, functional nutritionist and author of *Hungry Woman*, Pauline Cox MSc tells us the biggest mistakes we make when it comes to weightloss.

MANY STRUGGLE WITH unexpected weight gain as they move through their 40s and beyond. This increase in weight can feel even more frustrating when you're trying hard to lose weight and nothing seems to be working. Instead, you end up feeling deflated and can slowly begin to lose confidence that you'll ever feel like you again. So, why is it that stubborn weight can seemingly appear overnight and can be so difficult to shift?

BLOOD SUGAR OVERLOAD

It has a lot to do with blood sugar. When you eat, your blood sugar rises; how much of a rise depends on the type of food you are eating and also other factors. High glycaemic index (GI) foods such as bread, pasta and cakes will cause a steeper rise than an egg. When your blood sugar rises, your body has to move it out of the blood quickly to prevent damage. If the sugar is not needed for fuel, it gets converted into fat. But that's not the whole

picture. If it were as simple as "don't eat more than you need", then many women wouldn't be left scratching their heads when they deprive themselves for so long and still don't lose weight! The answer is insulin resistance.

INSULIN RESISTANCE

When you eat foods that continually spike your blood sugar, the efficient system of insulin ushering glucose into cells starts to dysfunction, leading to blood sugar levels staying consistently high as well as high insulin levels. Insulin actually blocks you from burning body fat and your poor cells don't get the fuel they need, leaving you lethargic, sluggish and angry all the time. Sound familiar? If so, you may well have insulin resistance. This condition becomes increasingly common from age 40 onwards. Muscles use up a lot of glucose, so as you lose muscle mass due to ageing, you're not able to use up as much of the sugar from your food. And if you keep on eating too many carb-heavy foods, especially on their own, you'll be headed towards increased fat stores.

FOUR WAYS TO SHIFT THE WEIGHT

Reduce your carbohydrate intake ideally to 50g or less per day. Wheat, wheat products and sugar are a great place to start. Swap your daily wheat loaf for a grain-free alternative – see the recipe opposite.

INTERMITTENT FASTING

When you give your body a period without eating, it will turn to its own reserves of stored fuel: fat. This comes with time and initially it can feel a little difficult as your blood sugars may go up and down like a yoyo as you've trained your body to be a professional sugar burner! As you start burning your own fat reserves for fuel, your blood sugars stabilise and hunger levels reduce.

DON'T GO LOW CAL

Eat plenty of low-carb veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower, green leafy veg and colourful ones. Top up on healthy fats such as avocados, olives, eggs, nuts, seeds, fatty fish and fatty meats, avoiding processed meats and meals that often contain unhealthy fats, additives and preservatives.

GO WITH YOUR GUT

Improving your gut health will see your happy hormones increase and your digestive health improve. Your good gut bacteria will help drive fat burning, instead of bad bacteria instructing your body to store fat. Health-promoting foods such as sauerkraut, live yoghurt and kefir are all great for gut health.

• To learn more about optimised fat burning and reduced cravings, see Pauline's new book *Hungry Woman: Eating for good health, happiness + hormones* (£27, Ebury Press). Photography by Luke Albert.



SMOKED SALMON & PRAWN MOUSSE IN MINUTES

This fail-safe mousse is packed with protein, anti-inflammatory fats and the hormone hero, magnesium. It works as a protein-packed, super low-carb breakfast or a light lunch.

Makes 4

- 30g ghee or butter
- 8 large eggs
- 100ml cream, milk or unsweetened nut milk
- 100g smoked salmon
- Small bunch of fresh chives, chopped
- 2 spring onions
- 150g cooked, peeled prawns
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 lemon, cut into 4 wedges, to serve

- 1 Melt the ghee or butter in a frying pan, then crack in the eggs and cook to scramble them. Take off the heat to cool slightly.
- 2 Add the slightly cooled scrambled eggs, cream or milk, salt and pepper to a blender and combine until smooth and creamy.
- 3 Add three-quarters of the smoked salmon to the blender and pulse until the mixture is speckled with salmon pieces. Mix in the chopped chives, reserving some to garnish.
- 4 Chop the spring onions into thin slivers and then toss evenly into four ramekins.
- 5 Spoon the egg and salmon mix into the ramekins and allow to set in the fridge for 3-4 hours.
- 6 Layer the mousse with cooked prawns, slivers of the remaining salmon and serve each with a lemon wedge, with the reserved chives sprinkled over. This mousse works well without the prawns, too!



SALAD DAYS

Light, bright and bursting with flavour, your summer salads just got a whole lot more interesting – and tastier!

GYOZA & CRUNCHY SLAW

TAKES 25 MINS
SERVES 4

- 125g Chinese leaf, finely shredded
- 175g white cabbage, finely shredded
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 100g carrots (ideally a range of colours), shredded or cut into matchsticks
- 100g radishes, finely sliced
- A generous handful of fresh coriander leaves
- 3 tbsp vegan mayonnaise (or regular)
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 4-6 vegetable gyoza (fresh or frozen) per person, depending on their size
- vegetable oil, for cooking
- 3 tbsp crispy onions from a packet
- A pinch of roasted/toasted sesame seeds
- Sriracha sauce, to serve

For the dressing

- 3 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tbsp finely chopped red chilli
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 1 small thumb of ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 1 tsp soy sauce

- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp soft brown sugar
- 1 tsp miso paste

1 Stir together the dressing ingredients, mashing the miso paste into the mixture until completely incorporated.

2 Tip all the vegetables and coriander leaves into a large mixing bowl, then pour the dressing over and toss well to coat.

3 Stir together the vegan mayo and soy sauce in a small bowl. Add a splash of water to make the mayo pourable.

4 To cook the gyoza, set a frying pan with a lid over a medium heat and pour in a splash of oil. When hot, add the gyoza, placing them flat-side down into the oil. Cook for 2-3 mins until golden on the bottom (or follow the packet instructions), then add a couple of tablespoons of water to the pan and quickly cover with a lid. Steam the gyoza for 4 mins, then remove from the heat.

5 Divide the slaw between 4 wide shallow bowls and perch the gyoza on top. Scatter over the crispy onions and a pinch of sesame seeds. Drizzle over the soy mayo and then zig-zag over the sriracha. Eat immediately. ▶

HARISSA CHICKEN SALAD

READY IN 1 HR

SERVES 4

- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 2 tsp harissa paste
- 2 tbs neutral oil
- 1 red onion, sliced into wedges
- 250g celeriac, cut into 2cm chunks
- 350g butternut squash, cut into 2cm chunks
- 150g carrot, cut into 2cm chunks
- 1 tsp nigella seeds
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 big handfuls of baby spinach
- 2 big handfuls of rocket
- 3 tbs pink pickled onions or use sauerkraut

For the dressing

- 4 tbs mayonnaise
- 2 tsp harissa paste, or to taste
- 2 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice, or to taste
- Water

1 Heat the oven to 220C/ fan 200C/gas 7.

2 Place the chicken thighs on a baking tray and rub them all over with the harissa and 1 tbs of the oil. Tip the onion, celeriac, squash and carrot onto a second baking tray, add the nigella seeds, turmeric, 1 tbs of oil and lots of salt and pepper, then toss with a spoon until everything is coated (you can use your hands but they will go yellow!). Roast both trays in the oven for 40 mins, tossing the vegetables and basting the chicken once, halfway through. Remove from the oven and allow to cool until warm rather than hot.

3 To make the dressing, stir the mayo and harissa together in a bowl and squeeze in the lemon juice, then add just enough water – a splash – to thin the dressing until it's pourable. Taste and add more harissa or lemon, if needed.

4 Divide the spinach and rocket among 4 plates or shallow bowls, then add some roasted vegetables and a chicken thigh to each. Scatter over the pickled onions (or sauerkraut), spoon over the dressing and add a final pinch of salt. Eat while still warm.



Leon Big Salads, by Rebecca Seal (£20, Conran), is out now. Images by Steven Joyce.

BLACK RICE WITH EDAMAME, CRISPY TOFU & MISO MAYO

READY IN 50 MINS
SERVES 4

- 200g Thai black rice
- 200g extra-firm tofu, cubed
- 2 tbsp chickpea flour
- Neutral oil, for cooking
- 200g frozen shelled edamame beans
- 6 radishes, very finely sliced
- 200g cucumber, cut into thin ribbons
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp pickled ginger, sliced
- 4 tbsp roasted unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped
- A generous pinch of black sesame seeds, to serve (or use toasted white sesame seeds)
- 2 tbsp crispy onions, from a packet

For the dressing

- 4 tbsp vegan mayo
- 1 tsp miso paste
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 1-2 tsp cold water

1 Simmer the black rice in a small pan of water, covered with a lid, for about 30 mins (or

according to the packet instructions), adding more water if necessary, until tender.

2 Meanwhile, prepare the tofu: place the cubed tofu in a bowl with the chickpea flour and toss to coat. Set a small frying pan over a medium heat and add a splash of oil. When hot, arrange the tofu pieces in a single layer and cook until golden on one side, about 5 mins, then turn and cook the other side. Remove from the pan to a plate lined with a clean tea towel.

3 Place the edamame in a small pan of water and bring to the boil. Drain and set aside.

4 Whisk together the dressing ingredients, omitting the water, until smooth – make sure the miso is mixed in. Add one teaspoon of water to start with – you want just enough so that it's pourable, but not so much that it's runny.

5 Once the rice is cooked, remove from the heat and tip onto a plate. Spread out to cool slightly.

6 Assemble the salad: arrange the rice in the bottom of 4 wide bowls. Scatter over the edamame, radish and cucumber, spring onion, pickled ginger and chopped peanuts. Place the tofu on top. Drizzle over the dressing, then finish with a pinch of sesame seeds and the crispy onions. Serve immediately.



I'M OFTEN ON INSTAGRAM, where I follow a lot of #silversisters – a community of women embracing their naturally grey, and often gorgeous, hair. The movement really took root (pardon the pun!) in lockdown when swathes of women – deprived of their usual visits to the hairdressers, and not keen to attempt home dying – decided to grow out their hair and keep it that way. Check out @stagesofgrey (who did hers before lockdown), @thesilverlining_1970 and probably the most glam of all, @annikavonholt. When I returned to work from maternity leave in 2019, the former deputy editor had ditched the bottle and gone from her shock of bright red/orange hair to grey, and naturally curly, too. She was clearly ahead of the curve having done it before it became “a thing” on social media, and I remember thinking it really suited her and wondered why she'd not done it sooner. And that's the thing. We're all going to go grey (although technically there is no such thing as grey hair; a hair strand is either its former colour or white. It's the mix of white and brown/black that causes the grey look). So when should we stop dying? For while there are growing numbers of Silver Sisters, there are more of us still dying our locks, presumably to look younger. But there comes a point where it no longer does add youth. I don't want to have dark hair in my 60s and look like a ghost, because my skintone will have changed and I'm pale anyway. I had my hair dyed red at an Aveda salon every month for years in my 20s, which wasn't to hide greys but just for the sake of it. But it started getting expensive, so I switched to home dye (I recommend Tints of Nature if you are going to do it yourself, as it's the least chemically



KATY PERI

meno pause

Editor-in-Chief
Katy Sunnassee
aka “Katy Peri”
wonders whether it's
time to embrace the
greys and ditch the
hair dye for good?

one I've tried that doesn't drip down your face). However, red is difficult to maintain, so I gave up on that and switched to brown. And I've been doing it myself for the best part of a decade, with the odd trip to the hairdressers thrown in to have highlights. However, my hair grows fast, even though there's less of it these days, and it's getting annoying seeing the grey root growth after only two weeks. If I were single, I would be sorely tempted to just take the plunge, stop dying it and have it all chopped off pixie cut style, like I did at age 20. But – and I hesitate to write this as he'll be annoyed at me for saying it publicly – my husband doesn't want me to go grey, at least not yet. He says I'll look old and unattractive. He thinks you need to be in your 50s at least to be grey. I disagree, of course, as some of the women I follow are in their 40s and even 30s and are rocking silver locks. How old you look is more about how you dress, your posture (which can be incredibly ageing) and your attitude. It's weird too as he's seemingly fine with my face ageing – he tells me never to get trout pout lip fillers or Botox – but when it comes to hair, he's quite adamant: no way, no grey! I've shown him pictures of glamorous women such as Annika to illustrate how good it can look, but he's not convinced. Which begs the question: should we seek the approval of our partners to make physical changes? They have to look at us every day, after all, so ought we take their views into consideration? Answers on a postcard! Or, rather, in this day and age, on Instagram...

See my posts on grey hair at [instagram.com/thehealtheditor](https://www.instagram.com/thehealtheditor)

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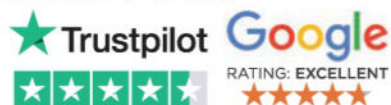
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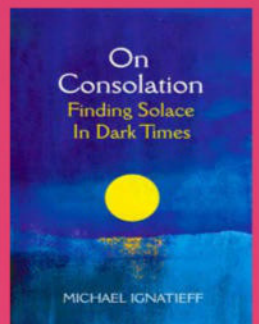
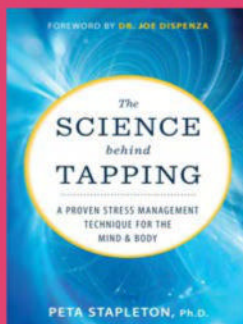
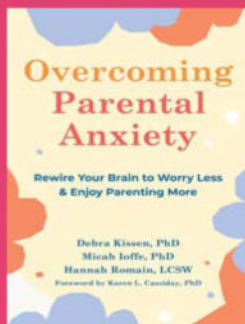
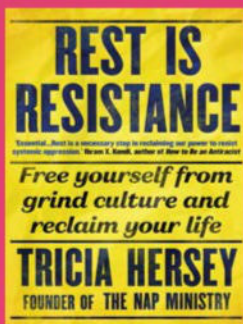
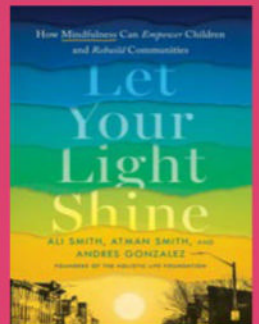
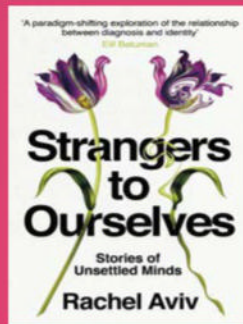
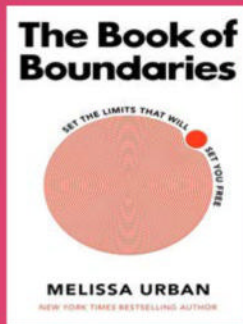
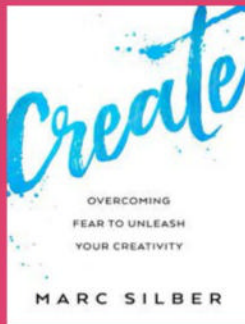
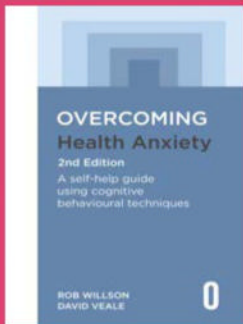
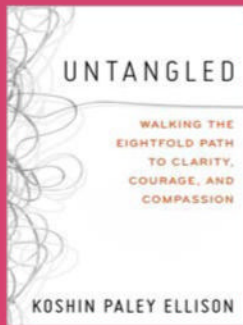
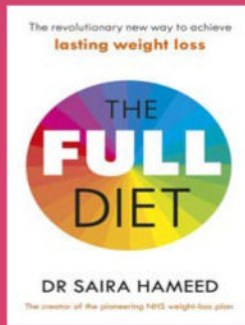
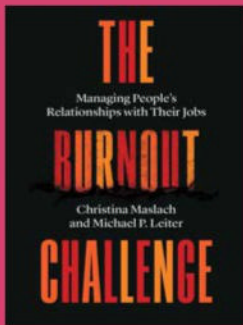
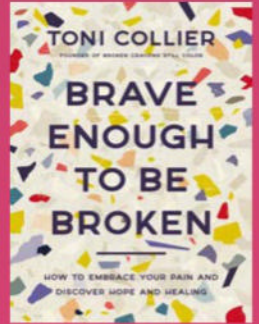
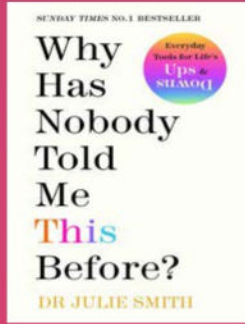
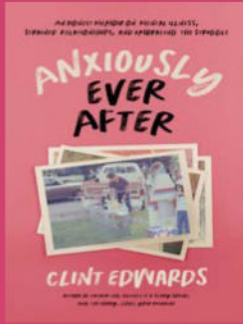
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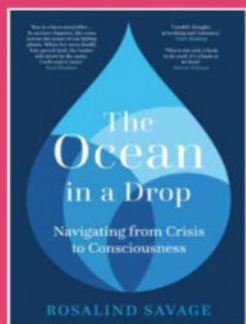
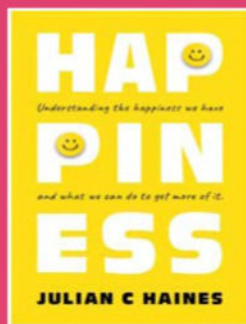
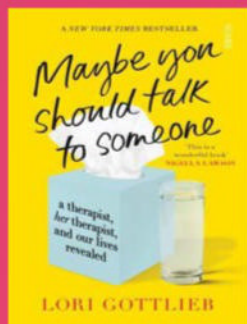
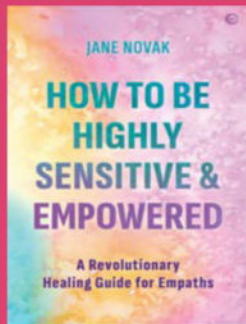
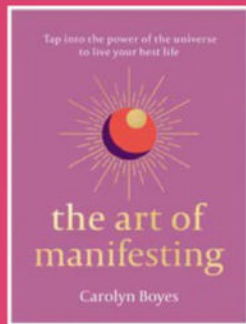
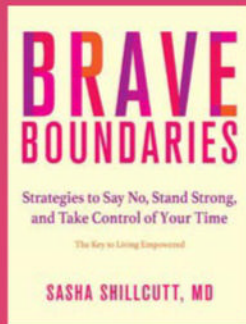
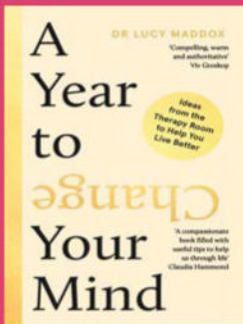
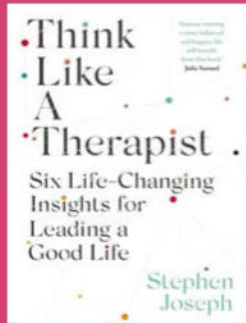
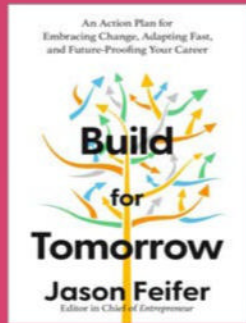
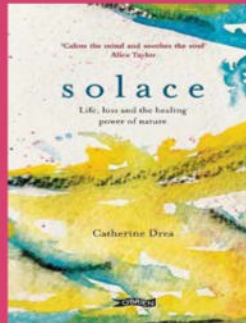
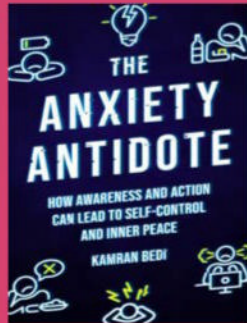
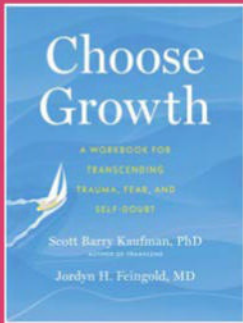
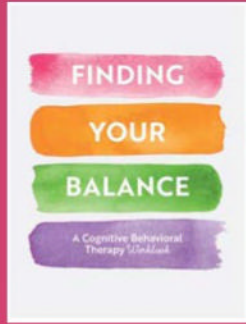
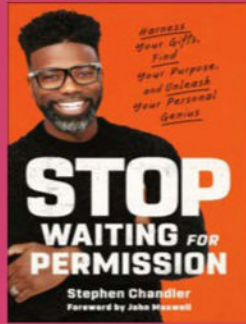
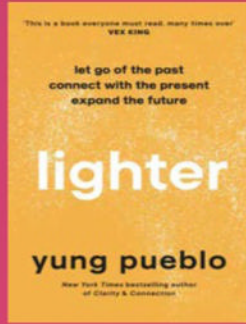
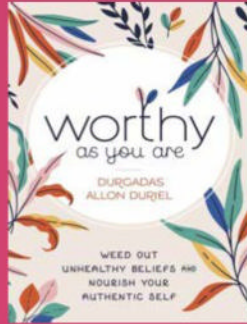
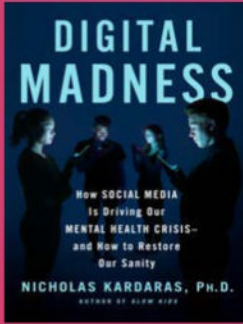
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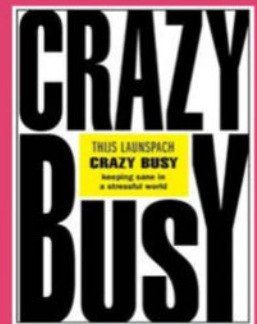
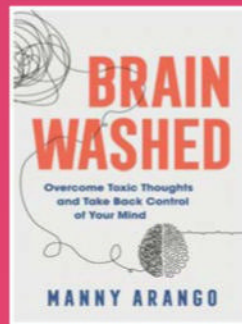
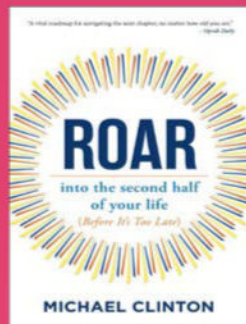
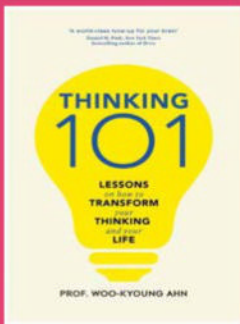
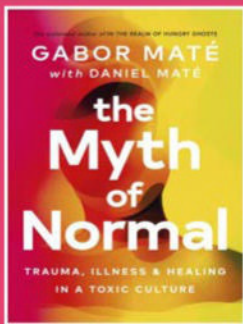
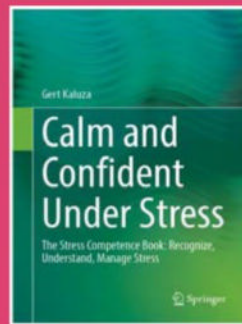
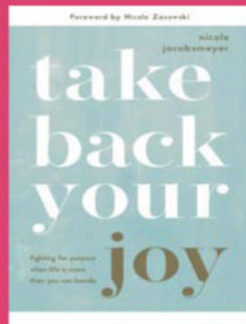
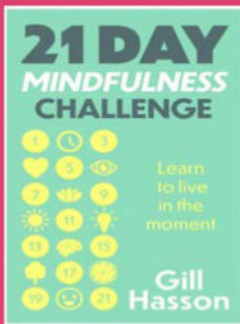
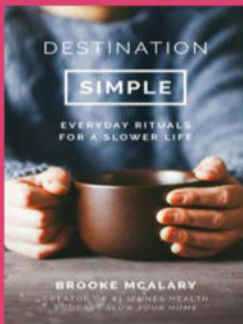
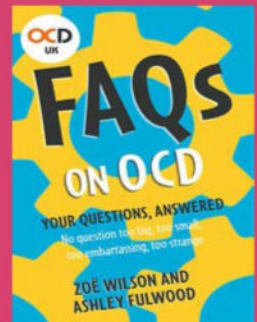
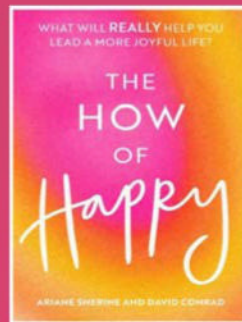
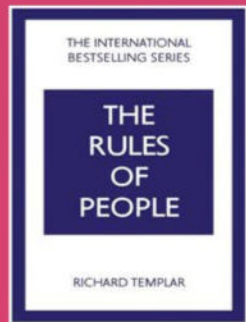
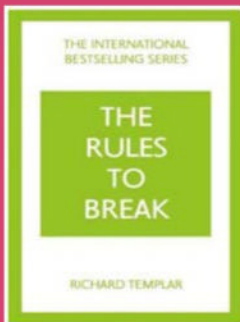
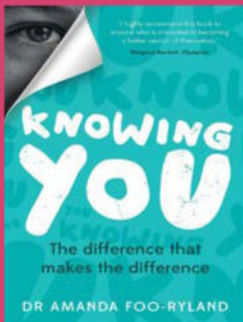
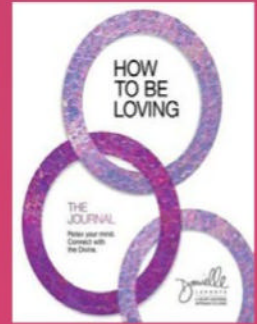
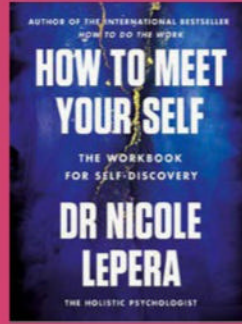
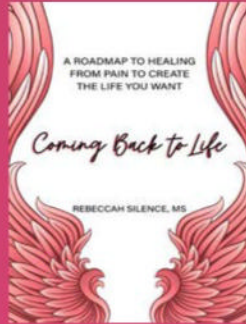
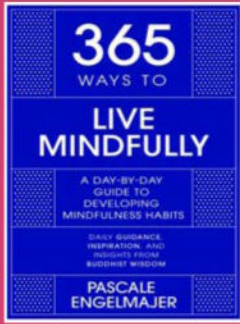
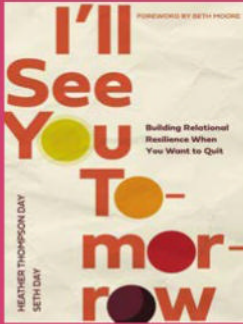
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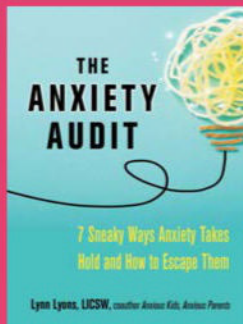
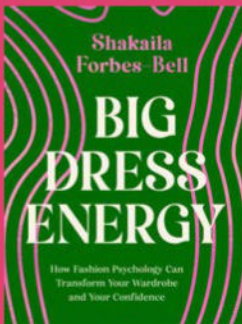
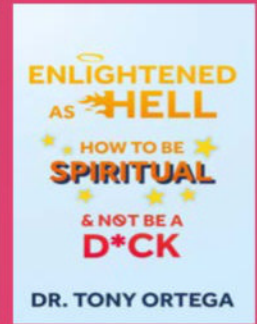
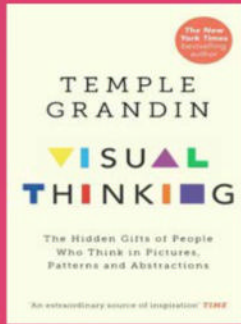
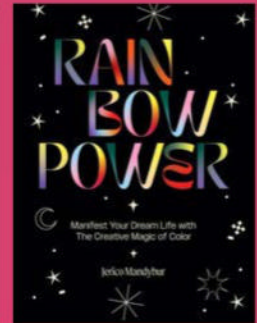
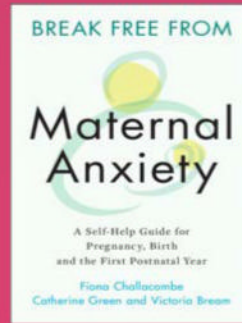
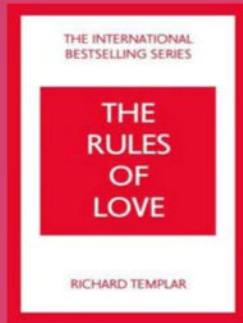
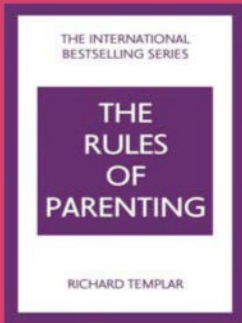
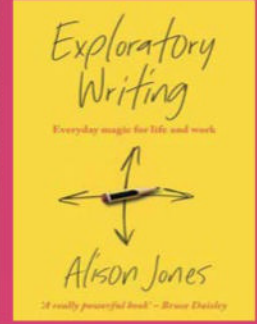
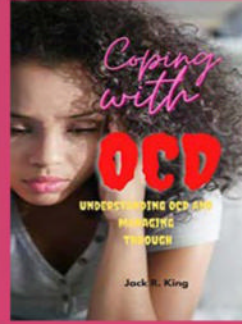
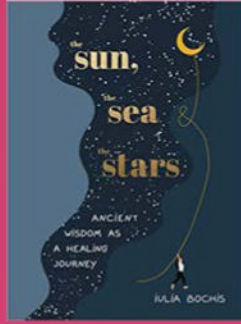
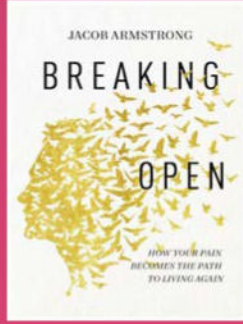
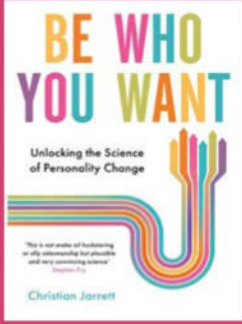
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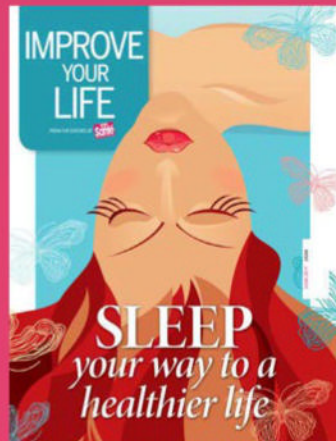
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