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YOUR SPRING ENERGY REFRESH

- ✓ Seize the long weekend
for **top-to-toe renewal**
- ✓ 26 natural lifestyle tweaks
to **ramp up immunity**
- ✓ Think yourself fitter with
4 ways to stay motivated



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VITABIOTICS



p30



WELCOME

April is a joyous time; nature is fully awake and energised, plus in some societies it's considered the beginning of the year, so a spot of spring cleaning and 'starting anew' is always appropriate.

Beauty-wise, now's the time to buff your body and **shed your winter skin to reveal a radiant new you (p86)**.

And when it comes to revving up your workouts, why not **bounce yourself fit (literally!) with a rebounder (p69)?**

These mini trampolines have been deemed by NASA the most effective type of exercise.

Feeling full of the joys of spring is also easier when your hormones are balanced, and this month we focus on **progesterone as being crucial for vitality and youthfulness (p30)**. Finally, with it being Easter and the fabulous four-day bank holiday ahead, we've put together a **long-weekend wellbeing plan (p14)** so you can pick and choose top tips to feel fantastic. I hope you enjoy the issue!

Katy x @RealKatyLouise

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Write to us: talkback@topsante.co.uk



p69



p14



Subscribe to Top Santé for just £16.50 and get a Kneipp beauty gift worth £27.50 – p44.

THE TOP SANTÉ MANIFESTO

At Top Santé we believe every woman has the ability to maximise her health and beauty at any age and regardless of her 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

regarding 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 leave it in the past and focus on what you can change today. We're here to help you on that path to better health, one small step at a time.

APRIL
2017

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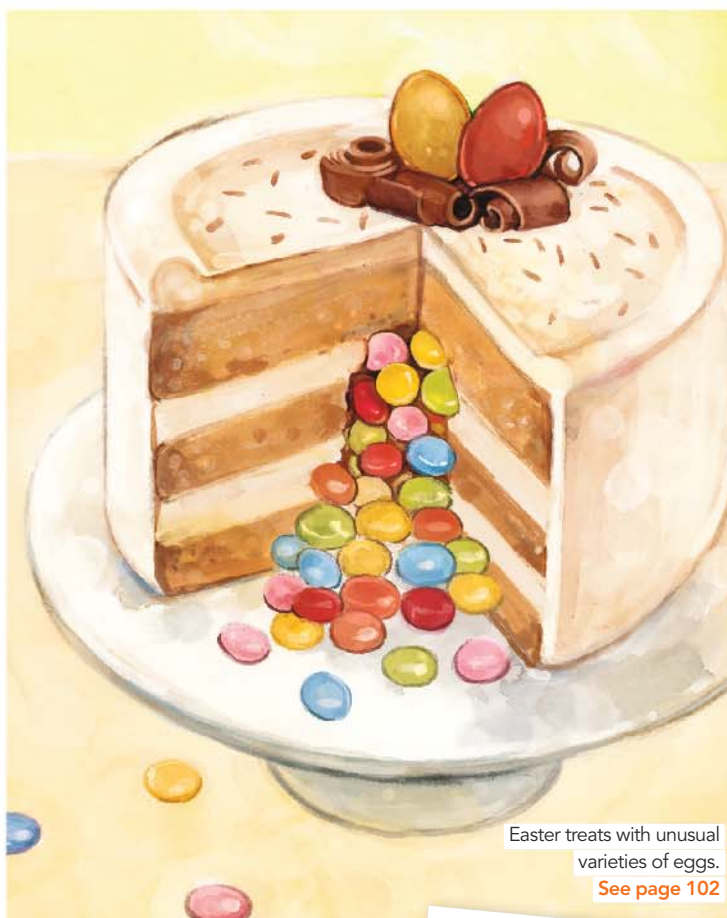
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Lovely light lunches from 'The Medicinal Chef'.

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Zero-calorie Truvia.[®] Leaves help make it sweet.

Being honest, we can't take all the credit for our sweetener – praise is due in large part to those little sweethearts: the Stevia leaves. Thanks to all their hard work, you are now able to enjoy **Truvia**[®] with its sugar-like texture and calorie-free sweetness.



For more delicious recipe ideas
check out Truvia.co.uk



YOUR HEALTHY APRIL

Feel refreshed, revived and energised with our natural wellbeing tips and advice.

DRIP DRIP DROP

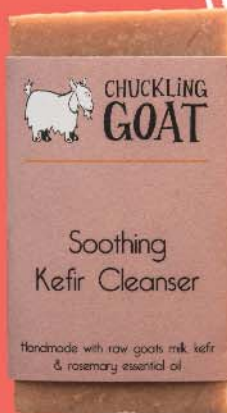
With April comes the inevitable shower or two but did you know these bursts bring with them a plethora of health benefits? Far from taking shelter or cursing 'bad weather', we'd all do well to revel in its presence.

As rain falls, it creates negative ions, which are tasteless, odourless, invisible molecules that are abundant in environments where there's fast-moving water, such as waterfalls, streams and during a rainy day. You'll smell these ions as they create a freshness in the air. When you breathe them in they enter your bloodstream where they're believed to produce biochemical reactions that help relieve stress, improve your mood and even boost your energy. It's time to start embracing those April showers!

An udderly good cleanser

If you want to achieve soft, clearer skin then Chuckling Goat's new kefir cleanser bar (£4.95, chucklinggoat.co.uk) could be the answer.

It contains a base of raw goat's milk, which is anti-inflammatory and soothes skin; kefir, which contains probiotics to help protect and improve skin's appearance, and coconut, olive and sustainable palm oils to keep skin hydrated and supple.



MAKING MEALS MORE PLEASURABLE

Scientists have discovered how mindful eating can help you stay trim. According to experts, taking note of not just the taste but the smell, texture and overall experience of a meal, coupled with eating it more mindfully, will result in you eating less of it without compromising enjoyment. You'll savour and enjoy each mouthful rather than wolfing something down in a hurry.

SEASON'S EATINGS SPRING LAMB

With spring comes the arrival of spring lamb. This is a fantastically healthy meat as each 113g serving can provide you with a variety of vitamins and minerals, with fewer calories than beef. One serving gives you nearly half of your recommended daily amount of selenium, which is a micronutrient that promotes a healthy thyroid. Why not try this Persian Lamb Quinoa Pilaf from gousto.co.uk?

PERSIAN LAMB QUINOA PILAF

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- 2 Add 130g of quinoa to a pot of boiling water and a pinch of salt and

cook over a high heat for 15-20 mins.

3 Meanwhile, heat a large pan with a drizzle of olive oil over a medium heat, add 200g lamb mince and cook for 4 mins until it starts to brown.

4 Crumble 1 chicken stock cube into the mince along with 2 finely chopped garlic cloves, 1 roughly chopped spring onion, 1 tbsp ras el hanout and a pinch of sugar, salt and pepper. Cook for 2 mins, then add a tin of drained chickpeas and cook for a further 3 mins.

5 Once the quinoa is tender, add 30g dried cranberries to the same pot and cook for a further minute until the cranberries have rehydrated. Drain the cooked quinoa and cranberries in a sieve and leave to steam-dry for a few mins.

6 Finally, gently mix the quinoa and cranberries through the lamb with 15g chopped and toasted almonds and 5g fresh, chopped mint. Serve and garnish with more chopped almonds and mint.





Standing up during meetings is proven to help people think faster!

STAND UP FOR YOUR HEALTH

The simple act of standing more in a day can be enough to reap numerous health benefits including boosting heart health, lowering blood pressure and burning calories. *On Your Feet Day* (onyourfeetday.com) is taking place across the country on 28 April with many companies involved, encouraging their workforces to sit less. One American study found that people who stood up more during their working hours were 46 per cent more productive. Standing more is also said to boost metabolism.

Top Santé feature's editor Kat has been trialling a standing desk – find out how she's been getting on next month.

*'The energy
of the mind is
the essence
of life.'*

Greek philosopher, Aristotle

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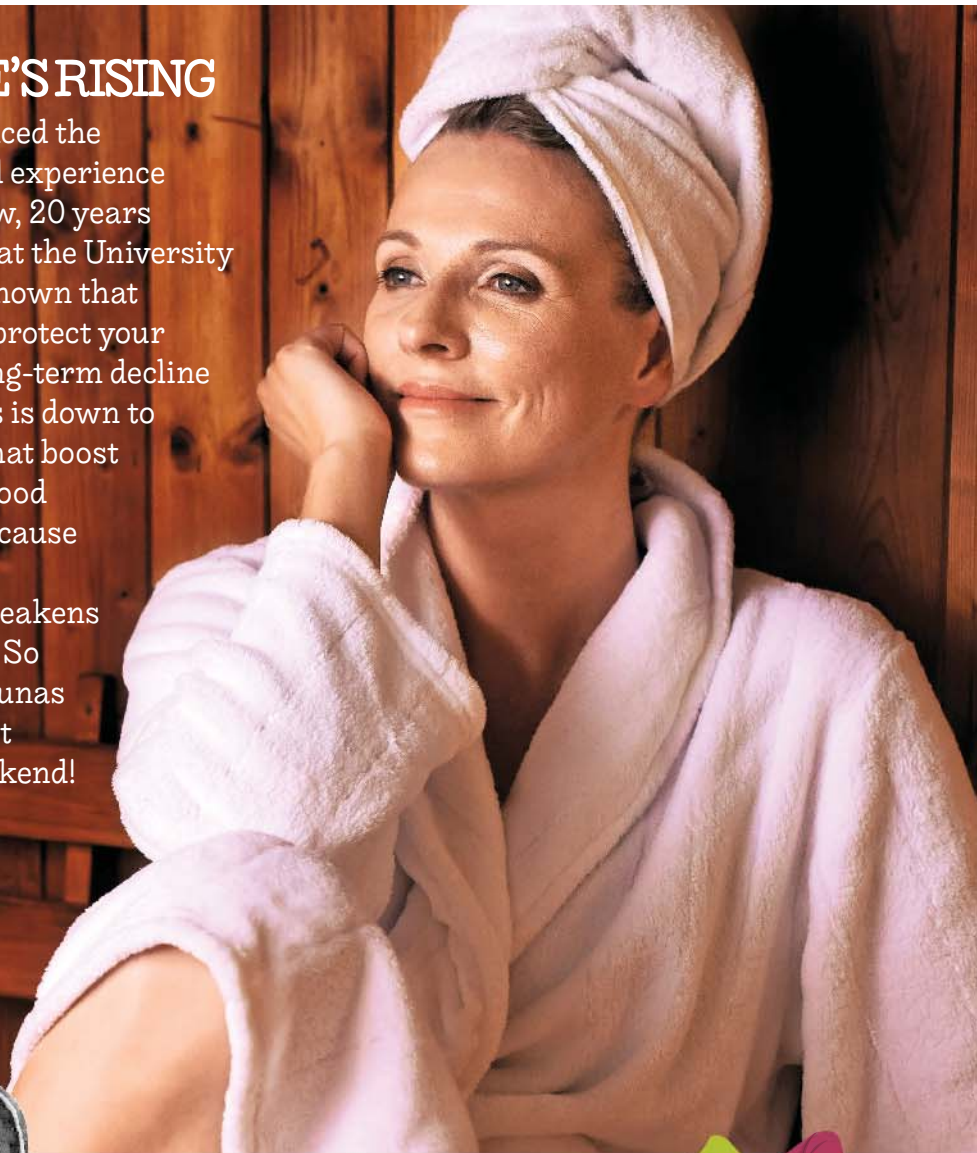
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TEMPERATURE'S RISING

You've probably experienced the soothing, deeply peaceful experience of a toasty sauna, but now, 20 years of research by scientists at the University of Eastern Finland has shown that weekly sauna visits can protect your memory and stave off long-term decline by up to 66 per cent! This is down to the warming thermals that boost circulation and reduce blood pressure. This is good because uncontrolled high blood pressure damages and weakens the brain's blood vessels. So with the popularity of saunas on the rise, it's the perfect reason to book a spa weekend!



APPY AND YOU KNOW IT

The healthy apps that make living a naturally healthy life a breeze!

APP NAME: *Wake up!*

With a series of playful activity suggestions, this app (free, barez-brown.com) is designed to get you off autopilot and more engaged with the world.

It helps you build up a picture of what makes you feel invigorated and then embrace and create more of these moments.

TIMELESS TRADITIONS

Fooling around

April Fool's Day on 1 April is one of the most light-hearted days of the year as people play pranks on one another. Its origins are uncertain but some see it as a celebration of the turn of the seasons. Scientists say practical jokes and humour

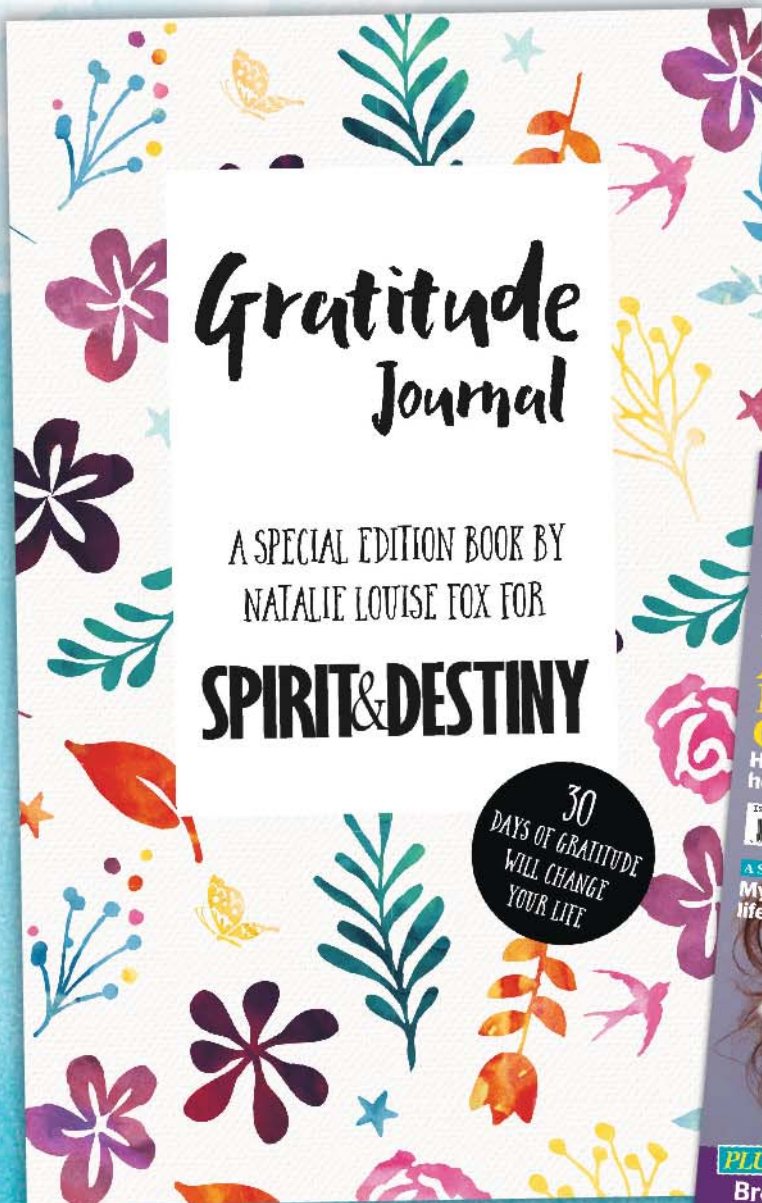
play a vital role in society and a day of mischievousness can release built-up tensions and ultimately make you feel calmer and happier. So embrace a practical joke or two and revel in a more relaxed you!

Seize the month!

April comes from the word Aprilis, meaning 'to open' and in some cultures the month heralds the start of the year.

Change your life in 30 days!

Get your EXCLUSIVE 30-day Gratitude Journal worth £10, with the April issue of Spirit & Destiny



Use this journal every day to reflect on what you are most grateful for and learn how to think more positively.



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Gratitude Journal available exclusively in Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Asda and WH Smith

MEET THE LIFESTYLE DOCTOR

Down-to-earth GP Dr Rangan Chatterjee, star of BBC One's *Doctor in the House*, talks blood sugar and how to stay energised all day.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT COME TO see me in my surgery say they feel tired for no apparent reason. It's one of the most common complaints along with not having enough sleep – though of course, the two are inextricably linked.

We are meant to wake up feeling full of beans ready to face the day, largely thanks to the hormone cortisol, which peaks around 6am. Come the evening, levels should be falling while melatonin, the sleep-inducing hormone, rises to ready you for sleep.

It's often tricky to maintain steady energy all day though, especially after lunch. I've noticed that the foods that often drive a mid-afternoon slump are sandwiches, jacket potatoes and pasta. These tend to raise blood sugar for a short while, followed by a blood sugar dip that leads to feelings of fatigue. The best way to maintain steady blood sugar is to choose your lunch wisely and go for meals filled with protein, healthy fats and veg.

YOUR ENERGISED AFTERNOON

By 3-4pm, most people are flagging and turn to caffeine for a quick pick-me-up. However, this can cause more tiredness later on and even the next day, because caffeine has a long half-life, which means if you drink it in the afternoon it can still be active in your body at night, thereby disrupting your sleep and causing tiredness the next day.

If your job is fairly sedentary, going for a brisk walk at 3pm or, if it's practical, doing a quick five-minute bodyweight workout** will really help boost your energy.

If you do have to stay at your desk, sit up straight and do a minute of deep breathing

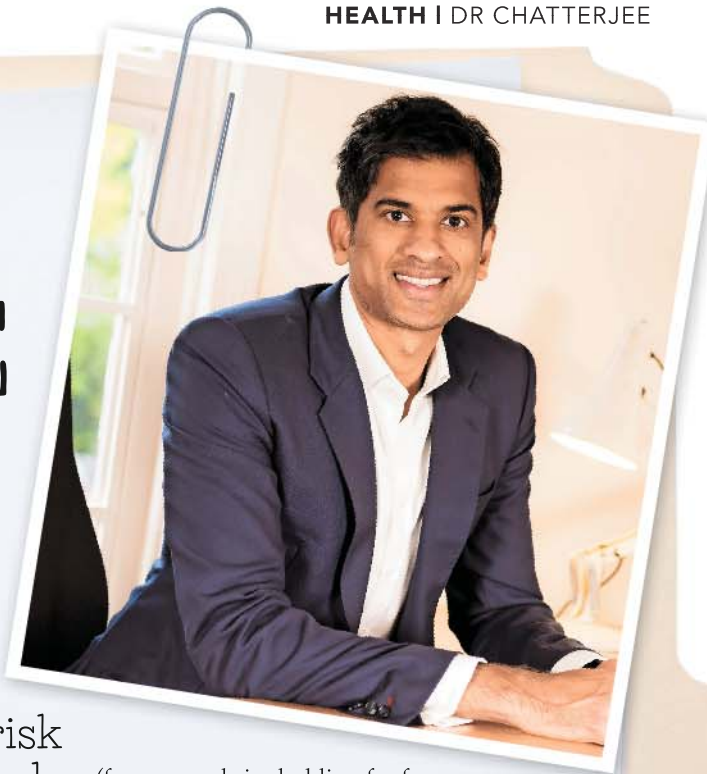
“A brisk walk and a minute of deep breathing can be enough to raise your energy levels.”

(four seconds in, holding for four, then exhaling for four seconds). This can often be enough to raise your energy levels.

It's also worth bearing in mind your mitochondria, which are the energy factories of each cell. They convert food into energy, so if they don't do this well, you'll feel fatigued. You can support mitochondria with a diet rich in whole, unprocessed foods. Supplementing with coenzyme Q10 will also help – your body naturally produces this but levels drop as you get older.

Find out more at drchatterjee.co.uk.

NEXT MONTH: Staying young is in the mind.



RANGAN'S all-day energy PRESCRIPTION

- For lunch, eat a good source of protein such as egg, fish or chicken, as well as healthy fats from avocado, olives or nuts, and lots of veg, either steamed or raw.
- Instead of coffee or a fizzy caffeinated drink, drink plain water.

- Try deep breathing before settling down to your afternoon's work.
- Limit caffeine intake to before noon. It'll help you sleep better, with a knock-on effect of more energy the next day.
- If you can't go for a five-minute walk at 3pm, at least walk around the building, or to the toilets that are the furthest away, so you get to stretch your legs. Moving is the key to keeping energy flowing.



4 DAYS TO A *rejuvenated* **YOU!**

Make the most of the long bank holiday weekend with our easy plan to help you feel refreshed and renewed come Easter Monday.

WORDS: LARISSA CHAPMAN. PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES.



WHAT A wonderful month April is, particularly as we're blessed with an extra-long weekend. But while plenty of people take the opportunity to do a little DIY or spruce up their gardens, you could opt for some simple improvements even closer to home – we're talking of the mind, body and soul variety. After all, weekends are designed for rest and rejuvenation. Cherry-picking from our ideas will help upgrade your wellbeing and have you positively brimming with energy and enthusiasm by the end of it. ▶

Foodie FRIDAY

Why not start your weekend trying out some new culinary delights?

With time to spare, you can afford to get creative!

INDULGE IN CHILLI CHOCOLATE

Chilli has long been hailed a superfood. It's a natural pain reliever and immune booster, and capsaicin, its active component, helps to lower blood cholesterol levels and keep arteries clear and strong.

TRY THIS Why not treat yourself to an Easter egg filled with chilli chocolates (£29, hotelchocolat.com)? They're 70 per cent dark chocolate with a warming hint of chilli.



Jazz up your brekkie with ginger

No breakfast on the go today. Why not set the table and enjoy an indulgent start to your weekend? One of the best ingredients to help revitalise you and kick-start your day is ginger. It's packed with antioxidants, which boost your metabolism and sharpen your brain, making you feel more revived.

According to a Thai study, women in their 40s who had ginger every day for two months showed a significantly enhanced working memory and felt more alert. Never used ginger at breakfast? Well now you can with the *Golden Turmeric And Ginger Breakfast Bowl* recipe (below) from mindbodygreen.com. It's easy to make and tastes so fresh and zingy!

TRY THIS

In a food processor, combine 1 cup of shredded coconut, 1 cored and chopped apple, 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger, 1 tsp grated fresh turmeric, ¾ cup of butternut squash purée, 1 cup of coconut milk, a pinch each of cardamom and salt, and pulse until the mixture is the texture of oatmeal. Transfer to a bowl and top with more freshly grated turmeric, a few cracks of black pepper, chopped fruit and nuts if desired. These measurements should serve two people, so it's perfect for you and your partner on this relaxed morning.



Sip on some ginseng tea

Championed for years in Asian cookery as a natural rejuvenator and... aphrodisiac, ginseng helps to fight fatigue and creates a relaxed yet alert state.

TRY THIS A cup of ginseng tea with your porridge (above) will set you up right for the day. Try Yogi Tea Ginseng (£2.39, ethicalsuperstore.com). Many skin creams also contain ginseng extract as it's proven to boost skin's vitality. Try Bravura Revitalising Ginseng Toner (£12.40, bravuralondon.com).



Snack on alkalising melons

If you find yourself a bit peckish today, opt for cantaloupe melons. They have an alkalising effect on your body and a high water content, which helps keep you hydrated – the key to revitalising your body.

TRY THIS Slice your melon in half, scoop out the seeds and fill the hole with cottage cheese for a super-filling, protein-packed snack.





THIS IS HOW KIDS EXPLORE THE WORLD



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AN INITIATIVE FROM THE EUROPEAN DETERGENT INDUSTRY

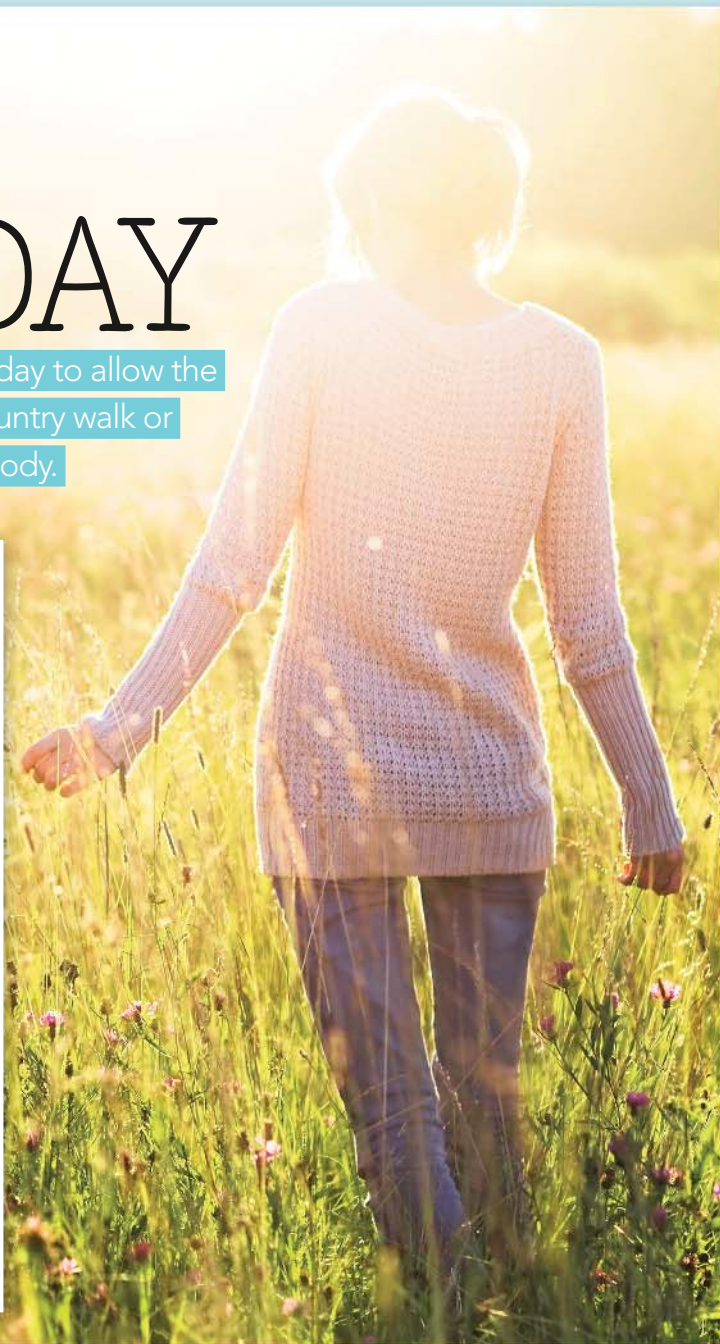
Superfit SATURDAY

After a food-filled Friday, get moving today to allow the energy to flow, whether it's a bracing country walk or something stretch-based to ease your body.

Take a wander

There'll no doubt be plenty of food temptation this weekend, what with Easter eggs and hot cross buns (see p102 for our healthy Easter treats). So, to make up for any indulgence, why not round up friends or family and head out on a long walk today? Walking is an easy way to rejuvenate your body and mind: just don some good trainers or walking boots and off you go. And, you'll be doing your heart and lungs a huge favour. Walking also releases endorphins – those feel-good hormones – so you're guaranteed to come back feeling happier too.

TRY THIS Why not join in with the popular *Walk 1,000 Miles* campaign? It challenges you to walk 1,000 miles in 12 months. A nice long weekend gives you the perfect opportunity to clock up some of those miles. Visit livefortheoutdoors.com/walk1000miles for more details and inspirational videos from fellow walkers.



STRIKE A POSE

If a long walk isn't practical, why not try five minutes of yoga – even holding a single pose can be enough to leave you feeling rejuvenated.

TRY THIS Ustransana, also known as Camel pose, invigorates your entire body as it stretches your core, opens your chest and expands your lungs to let in more oxygen.

- Kneel down with your knees hip-width apart. Engage your core

and begin to lift and raise your ribcage upwards so you start to arch your back. Rest your arms on your lower back, pushing your pelvis forward slightly to feel the stretch through your whole upper body and thighs. To take it further, engage your thighs and lean back even more, placing your hands on your heels. After five deep breaths, slowly return to an upright position before repeating three or four times.



Take the plunge

With the weather picking up, now's the perfect time to enjoy a spot of refreshing and rejuvenating outdoor swimming. The cold water gets your heart pumping and boosts your cardiovascular system, while also lowering cholesterol and enhancing your immune system. Mind-wise, wild swimming has been proven to help boost your mood too.

TRY THIS The UK is teeming with rivers, estuaries, lakes and seawater just begging for you to take a dip. Visit wildswim.com to find your closest wild swimming destination. And if swimming's not your thing, you can still reap the refreshing and rejuvenating benefits of water without getting your hair wet. Why not whip off your socks and shoes while out on a walk and dip your feet in a river, lake or the sea? According to reflexology experts, submerging your feet in water induces relaxation and balances emotions.

There's something so rejuvenating about swimming in natural waters



Feel good with yin yoga

We all know how beneficial yoga is for our minds and bodies, but of the many styles, yin yoga is said to be one of the most rejuvenating. It focuses on your joints and muscles and is said to be best for improving flexibility and tension release, which is ideal after a long week at work to help you feel revived and rejuvenated. Of course, yin yoga also offers the usual yoga benefits, such as relaxation and spiritual healing.

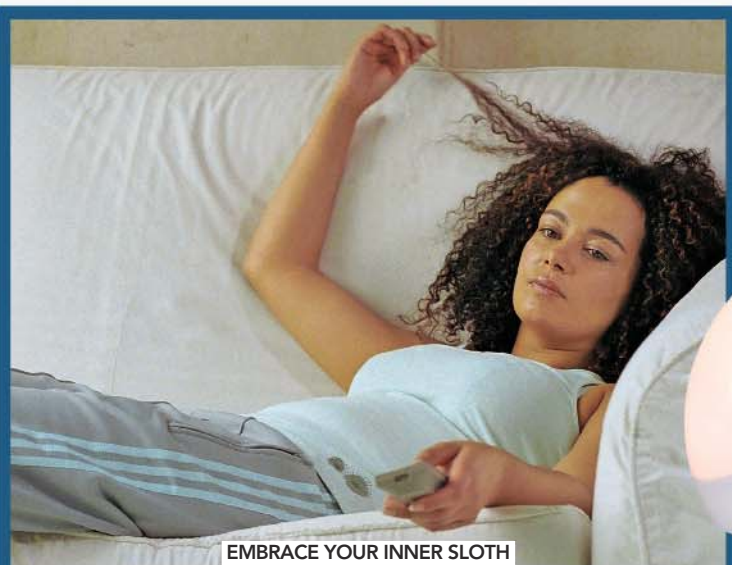
TRY THIS Be inspired to give some of the moves a try for yourself with this video: m.youtube.com/watch?v=1sDPQyWZJi0.



Sleepy SUNDAY



Any spare time today should be spent napping or taking it easy. A little bit of doing nothing is incredibly good for your health after all!



EMBRACE YOUR INNER SLOTH

Sloth – roughly translated as laziness – is perhaps not a word you imagine *Top Santé* would promote, but today we're actively encouraging it. It's good to be lazy once in a while, even if it's just for a morning, or even an hour. Neuroscientists are increasingly finding that our brains depend on downtime to process the data we're deluged with on a daily basis. Time doing nothing enables your brain to consolidate memory and reinforce learning by strengthening the neural pathways that make such feats possible.

TRY THIS Stick on a feel-good film and sit back for a couple of hours. Simple!

SKIP THE SHOWER Studies have found that washing less frequently benefits your skin. It's teeming with beneficial bacteria that actually produce their own antibodies to fight off viruses and bad bacteria.

TRY THIS Take a day off from the soap. This helps keep your skin's microbes healthy and happy so they can do their job of protecting you.



Relax into an early night

Get a nice early night tonight as sleep is perhaps the best rejuvenator there is. There are many ways you can prep for the best-ever snooze.

TRY THIS ● The Lumie Bodyclock Starter 30 Alarm Clock (£56.99, johnlewis.com) offers a sunrise and sunset function designed to help regulate your sleep/wake cycles to ultimately help you sleep better. ● Avalon Organics' Nourishing Lavender Bath & Shower Gel (£6.99, ocado.com) is made with lavender essential oil. A soak in this soothing aroma will help to calm and relax both mind and body before bed. ● Dormeasan (£4.15, avogel.co.uk) is a natural, herbal sleep remedy made from extracts of freshly harvested, organically grown Valerian root and hops. It's designed to help you drift off into a natural, peaceful sleep.



ENJOY HEALTHY DAYDREAMS

Letting your mind unwind and wander freely, either at home or perhaps while out on a spring walk, is when clarity and creativity are born.

TRY THIS Kick back and watch the clouds pass rather than making a mental list of all the things you need to do. Daydreaming can help you find new solutions to problems, help you uncover what it is you are really passionate about or give you a new perspective on things. Insights often just seem to 'drop in' when the mind is roaming free, which can feel hugely rejuvenating.

The recipe for a perfect garden...



You



A little bit of inspiration



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Mindful MONDAY

Taking a day to live more mindfully and reconnect with the world around you can be the perfect way to re-set and rejuvenate, ready for the week ahead.

Fill your life with flowers

As it's Easter, daffodils and tulips are the most abundant flowers and perfect for capturing your attention.

TRY THIS Arrange a few bunches around your home. A study by Harvard University found that having flowers in your home can help to boost your creativity and energy levels, leaving you feeling inspired and rejuvenated.



Feel your feet!

It's easier to be mindful when you feel centred and grounded, and one of the best ways to achieve this is to send your attention to your feet. This brings down any head-based, dizzy or stressy energy into your soles, which are what anchor you to the earth, after all.

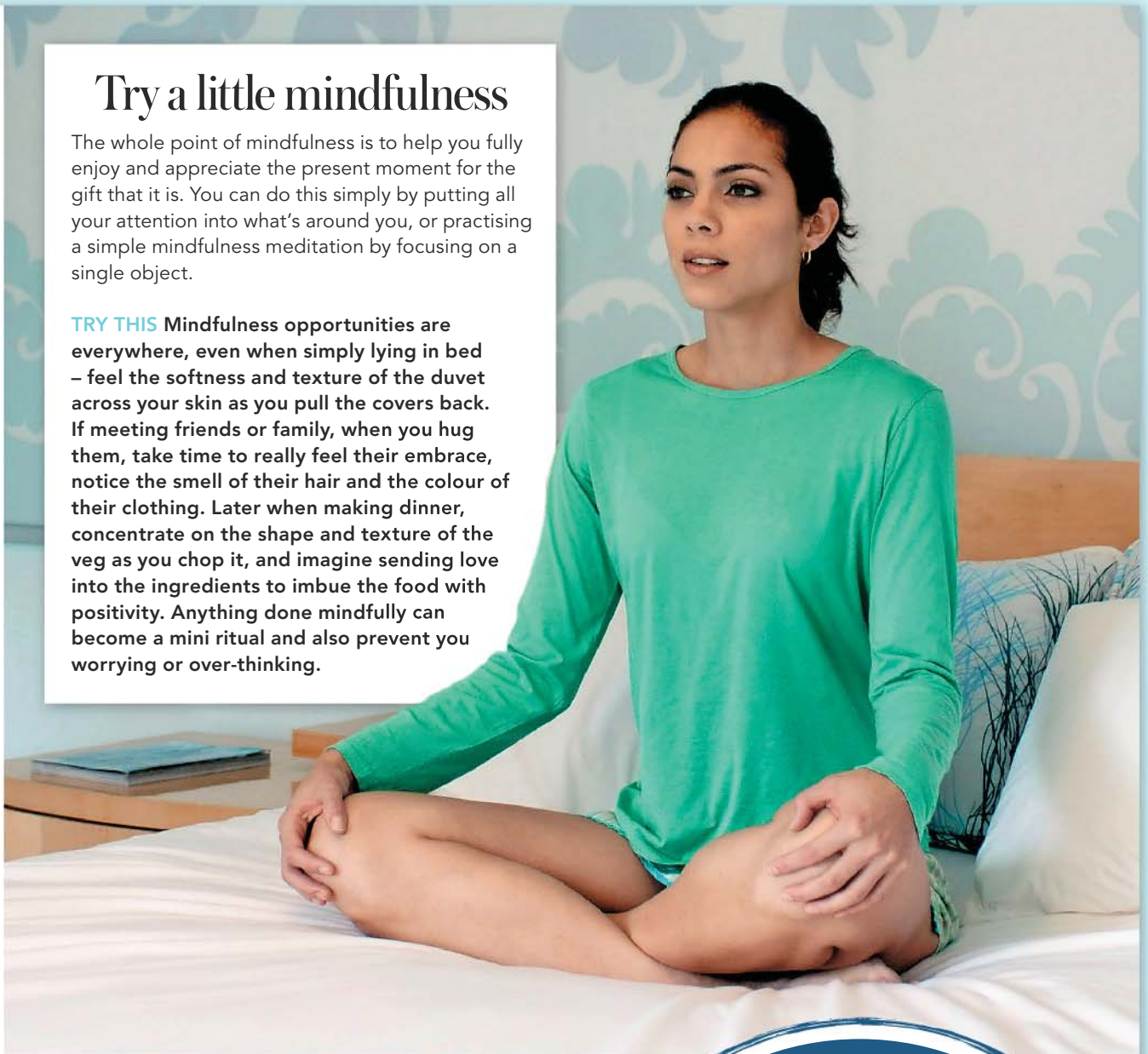
TRY THIS Any time you start to stress or worry, or feel overwhelmed with so much going on, just think 'feet!' and connect to whatever sensations are currently in your feet. If you can spend your day barefoot, all the better. Another way to feel mindful in the moment is to give yourself a good foot rub. Just five minutes massaging your toes, and especially pressing your thumbs into the middle of your soles, will bring you into your body and out of your head. Use an oil or you can do it through socks. Not only does this help promote mindfulness, but a foot rub will refresh you all over as you'll be stimulating all the reflex points that link to other parts of your body.



Try a little mindfulness

The whole point of mindfulness is to help you fully enjoy and appreciate the present moment for the gift that it is. You can do this simply by putting all your attention into what's around you, or practising a simple mindfulness meditation by focusing on a single object.

TRY THIS Mindfulness opportunities are everywhere, even when simply lying in bed – feel the softness and texture of the duvet across your skin as you pull the covers back. If meeting friends or family, when you hug them, take time to really feel their embrace, notice the smell of their hair and the colour of their clothing. Later when making dinner, concentrate on the shape and texture of the veg as you chop it, and imagine sending love into the ingredients to imbue the food with positivity. Anything done mindfully can become a mini ritual and also prevent you worrying or over-thinking.



CLEAR A CUPBOARD Spring is the perfect time to initiate new things, whether that's a project, a fitness regime or refreshing clothes or beauty products.

TRY THIS If you're looking for the impetus to begin, start by tidying something small. Picking just one cupboard or drawer helps you get a sense of completion, which spurs you on to bigger things. Who knows, you may end up spring cleaning the entire house – all of which can be done mindfully!



Breathe it out

One of the easiest ways to breathe new life into your body is to, well, literally breathe, only better than before.

When you live mindfully, you naturally inhale and exhale more slowly and deeply, which will inevitably have a rejuvenating and energising effect.

TRY THIS The cleansing breath is a great way to release stress, especially from your shoulders and back. Sit up straight and inhale deeply for 5-6 seconds, then open your lips just a little and exhale through your mouth for the same amount of time. Do this 2-3 times whenever you feel you need to 'up' your oxygen levels. **TS**

HEALTHY MOUTH = *longer life!*

We all like to have fresh breath but now the health of our mouths is turning out to be one of the keys to longevity, and it's all down to the delicate balance of bacteria there...

BACTERIA AND their relevance to health has been big news for the past couple of years, with a rise in studies looking into the microbiome – that is, the trillions of bacteria and other microbes that live in your intestines. But while most of the studies so far have focused on the gut, new awareness is spreading to other parts of the body, especially the mouth. And the good news is that your mouth microbiome helps keep your whole body healthy.

Inside your mouth there are around 7-10 trillion microbes that set up home in the nooks and crannies. 'This community of mostly bacteria, but also some fungi and viruses, protects you from deadly viruses and bacteria in the environment. Eradicating this oral ecology would be like destroying a coral reef protecting an island,' says Dr Gerry Curatola, founder of US-based Rejuvenation Dentistry and author of new book *The Mouth-Body Connection* (£20.99, Hachette).

'When healthy, your mouth microbiome acts as a semipermeable membrane, transporting oxygen to

your gums and helping minerals from saliva to remineralise your teeth,' Dr Curatola adds.

Part of this much-needed microbiome is plaque, which actually protects your teeth and gums. When your oral microbiome is in balance, plaque is a relatively clear, thin, odourless film, but if you eat an acidic diet that contains large amounts of refined carbohydrates, sugars and carbonated drinks, the acid-loving bacteria begin to overpopulate. This results in the formation of unhealthy plaque, which is often a thick, sticky, smelly film.

'Rather than stripping away all bacterial plaque, as most of us have been taught to, it's far better to restore microbial balance so you limit unhealthy growth in the first place,' says Dr Curatola. The easiest way to do this is via your diet by including lots of alkalising foods, which means a whole load of green! Think spinach, broccoli, cabbage – you get the idea.

GATEWAY TO HEALTH

Your mouth also mirrors what's going on inside your body. 'Bleeding gums when you

WORDS: KATY SUNNASSEE. PHOTOGRAPHS: JUMP FOTO, GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK.

MARVELLOUS MICROBES

You have an estimated 700 different types of bacteria living in your mouth, and 6-10 trillion at any one time. And your oral microbiome is as unique as your thumbprint. 'Its main aim is to protect you, then to aid in digestion,' says Dr Gerry Curatola. Many of these microbes belong to the *Streptococcus* species. While *Streptococcus pyogenes*, also known as group A strep, does cause strep throat, most of the bacteria from this family are beneficial and help fight off opportunistic bugs.

brush is a sign of low-level inflammation elsewhere, which can indicate more serious problems,' says Dr Curatola, who adds that gum disease can increase your risk of a heart attack tenfold and create a seven-times greater risk of developing type-2 diabetes. 'This is because chronic, low-grade inflammatory conditions trigger your liver to release C-reactive proteins (CRP), which have inflammatory effects on your whole circulatory system,' says Dr Curatola.

New research has also shown that unhealthy bacteria can get into your bloodstream through bleeding gums, and these can get into the lining of your heart, liver, pancreas and colon.

ALL ABOUT THE VITAMINS

In the 1970s, a Japanese researcher discovered severe vitamin C deficiencies in some people with gum disease. They were also lacking coenzyme Q10, which is produced in your body to help energise cells and also have an antioxidant effect. Top up on both for a healthy mouth.

NEW-GEN TOOTHPASTES

While good hygiene is undoubtedly important, Dr Curatola believes a lot of the toothpastes and mouthwashes available can

disrupt our delicate oral microbiome. 'Most mouthwashes often contain alcohol, which dehydrates the mouth and disturbs the microbes there,' he says.

Other chemicals found in most oral hygiene products that can disrupt the microbial

balance in your mouth include triclosan, which is a pesticide that's non-biodegradable, and sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), which is an emulsifier and detergent also found in lots of shampoos and shower gels.

And while most of us are accustomed to, and seek out, that minty fresh taste from brushing, Dr Curatola says a strong mint flavour might not be that great for nourishing a healthy microbial ecology in the mouth. 'Even natural essential oils such as peppermint, eucalyptus, oregano and tea tree oil can disturb the microbiome as they are known antimicrobials that kill off bacteria and fungi,' he says.

So, non-minty toothpastes could be the way forward, including those flavoured with fennel and Ayurvedic herbs (see p28). However, plenty of natural brands contain either tea tree or peppermint, and claim the ingredients being antimicrobial is a good thing, so if you do choose those, at least they're free from SLS, sweeteners and colours.

How to floss

Keep your gums strong, pink and healthy with proper flossing, ideally after each meal but at a minimum before you go to bed. Use the flat tape-type floss as it's easier to get between very tight teeth. With the floss tied around two fingers of each hand, slide it between your teeth. Avoid pulling it backwards and forwards, but instead pull it into a C-shape around one tooth and slide it up and down the surface, going down into the gum around 5-8 times.

Then, pull the floss in the other direction to do the same on the other tooth surface.





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*Source: A survey of dental hygienists in the UK, Eaton et al. (2012).

5 STEPS TO A healthy mouth

Follow Dr Curatola's tips for keeping your mouth microbiome healthy and increase your chances of living to a ripe old age!

1 SWITCH TOOTHPASTE

Opt for more mouth-friendly formulas:

- Weleda Calendula Toothpaste (£4.50, weleda.co.uk) contains fennel.
- Auomere Ayurvedic Foam Free Cardomom Fennel Toothpaste (£6.90, luckyvitamin.com) contains Ayurvedic neem and peelu tree extracts.
- Revitin Prebiotic Toothpaste (£12, revitin.com) is the first prebiotic toothpaste. It contains vitamins E and C and anti-ageing CoQ10 and methylsulfonylmethane.
- PerioBiotic Toothpaste Fennel (£24.95, amrita.nutrition.co.uk) is a probiotic toothpaste that helps kill off harmful strains of strep bacteria.

3

RINSE WITH A SALT SOLUTION Fill a jug with purified or spring water, and keep adding Himalayan salt until it stops dissolving – this is the point of 'saturation'. Keep the jug in the bathroom and use a few teaspoons to rinse your mouth after brushing each morning and evening.

Himalayan salt is loaded with 84 trace minerals and macrominerals and is also one of the purest sources of salt on earth. Using it in a saline rinse helps reduce inflammation and remineralise teeth.



4 KEEP ON EXERCISING

The benefits of exercise are numerous and now even linked to mouth health. Being fit improves your immune system and circulatory function, both of which benefit your mouth, and when you're exercising, you're promoting the flow of fluids around your body, helping the delivery of nutrients and oxygen to your cells. What I observed for years was that runners had very low incidence of gum disease. From this I deduced that a moderate amount of exercise each day is a key component to good oral health as well as overall wellness. Any type of cardio for at least 20 minutes will get your fluids flowing!



2 RELAX!

How does relaxing keep your mouth microbiome healthy? Being constantly stressed not only leads to poor food choices but also more cavities because saliva dries up when you're stressed. What's more, stress can cause teeth grinding and lead to jaw joint dysfunction. Try 15 minutes morning and night of either mindfulness meditation, yoga or even prayer, and focus on relaxing the muscles in your face, as well as your body.

5 Eat a 'triple A' diet

Chomp on lots of antioxidant-filled, alkalising greens including kale, spinach, chard and any other leafy veg. Also add half a teaspoon of chlorella powder to smoothies and juices as this type of algae is hugely alkalising, and detoxifying. Include foods that have anti-inflammatory properties such as the super spice turmeric, and eliminate inflammatory triggers, which can include gluten and dairy for some people. 🌱



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Visit uk.pjurmed.com for more information and to find your easy solution to experiencing maximum pleasure today!



The secret to STAYING YOUNG

Want to know how to have more energy and a youthful body? It's all down to keeping a certain hormone happy and balanced.

OUR HORMONAL system is both beautiful and mysterious. We might not always fully understand it, but we can intuitively feel the power of hormonal changes. When it's balanced, you feel great and glow with radiance and good health.

When it comes to sex hormones, oestrogen and testosterone tend to

get all the press, but an equally vital one is progesterone, often dubbed the 'feel good' or 'youth hormone'. 'Most conventional doctors only look at progesterone in relation to pregnancy when levels are at their highest, but it has many other health benefits too,' says Dr Sohreh Roked, GP at Omniya Mediclinic, London. Read on to discover more about why progesterone is such an anti-ageing hormone...



IT BLASTS FAT

One reason progesterone is so great is its ability to aid weight loss. When your body is producing sufficient progesterone, it will help you to both lose weight and maintain a healthy weight. 'The hormone has a diuretic effect that reduces water retention and bloating, it speeds up metabolism and enhances fat burning,' says Dr Roked.

It also helps to prevent oestrogen dominance, which can cause weight gain, especially on the buttocks, thighs and around the middle.

IT CURBS CRAVINGS

Good levels of progesterone can even help you to resist the biscuit tin and make healthy food choices. The reason for this is that progesterone helps to regulate blood sugar levels by lowering insulin.

'On another level, eating badly can throw hormones, including progesterone, out of balance and make it more difficult to lose weight,' says nutritionist Dr Marilyn Glenville. 'If you eat too many sugary foods, this causes insulin spikes.'

When your blood sugar levels rise too high, your body produces insulin to balance it. Insulin is our fat storing hormone. So, the more insulin your body makes, the more stubborn fat you accumulate.'

When you make too much insulin, this means progesterone levels are continuously depleted. Sugary foods also cause the body to produce more cortisol and this further impairs the action of progesterone.

IT BOOSTS ENERGY

The thyroid gland releases hormones that control metabolism and regulate many bodily functions including muscle strength, heart rate, cholesterol levels and more. When your thyroid is working properly it's easy to maintain a steady weight and good skin and hair, plus you have lots of energy.

'Progesterone and thyroid hormones are very closely interlinked,' says Dr Roked. 'Progesterone stimulates the production of an enzyme that makes thyroid hormones. In fact, quite often when a woman has a thyroid imbalance, a GP will only look at her thyroid but it may be that low progesterone is the underlying problem.'

CHANGING LEVELS

Progesterone levels can fluctuate. During ovulation, it more than doubles, then levels dip just before a period. It's at its highest during pregnancy and naturally decreases in perimenopause and menopause. The excess cortisol secreted when you're stressed reduces and blocks the action of progesterone, and poor diet, lack of exercise and certain medications can also lower levels. Chemicals such as bisphenol-A (BPA) found in many plastics, and phthalates, found in fragrance, cosmetics, household cleaners and food packaging contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals that disrupt hormones generally. So whatever your age or situation, there are plenty of things you can do to give your progesterone levels a boost.

IT MAKES YOU GLOW

'This revitalising hormone is beneficial for skin elasticity and circulation,' says naturopathic doctor Natasha Turner. It also has an anti-inflammatory effect, which helps to regulate the action of an enzyme called dihydrotestosterone (DHT) that causes sebum production that can lead to acne. Balanced progesterone levels helps to keep DHT levels low and skin blemish-free.

IT HELPS YOU SNOOZE

Another benefit of progesterone is that it has a natural calming effect that can help you sleep better. It enhances the effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which is a neurotransmitter that soothes your brain making you more level-headed and relaxed. Recent studies show that sleep boosts immune function, helps you to avoid weight-gain, reduces stress, enhances mental function and has a rejuvenating effect that makes you look younger. It also helps to keep your hormones balanced. 'Not getting enough sleep raises cortisol levels and lowers progesterone, which is then a vicious circle as without progesterone, you won't get as much shut-eye,' says Dr Roked.

YOUR NATURAL PROGESTERONE BOOSTERS

1 What you eat is an easy place to start. Try...

● **Five portions of vegetables each day.** Vegetables are high in fibre and this is one of your greatest allies in maintaining good hormonal balance. Fibre helps to regulate blood sugar (keeping insulin stable) and reduces cortisol levels. It also helps the body to eliminate excess oestrogen that can throw hormones out of balance.

● **Good fats.** You need a variety of fats, including healthy (medium-chain) saturated fats and cholesterol for healthy hormone production. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids are especially beneficial. These include wild salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, herring, chia seeds, flaxseeds, walnuts and egg yolks. Omega-3s are anti-inflammatory, and they also keep cells fluid and receptive. For hormones to work properly they have to bind to receptors. If these receptors become hardened, hormones become imbalanced. Other healthy (medium-chain) fats include olive oil, macadamia oil, yoghurt, nuts, avocados and coconut milk.

● **Protein.** You need protein to make progesterone. It also helps to regulate blood sugar levels. Ideally, include some protein with every meal. Try seafood, tofu, nuts, chickpeas, quinoa, lentils, organic lean meat and wild fish.

● **A low sugar diet.** Sugar causes insulin spikes, which depletes progesterone production.

2 Supplements and herbal remedies can help. Try...

● **Vitamins, minerals and amino acids.** Take these daily: vitamin C (750mg), magnesium (200g), vitamin B6 (50-100mg), zinc (15-25 mg), vitamin E (100 – 130mg) and L-arginine (5-6g).

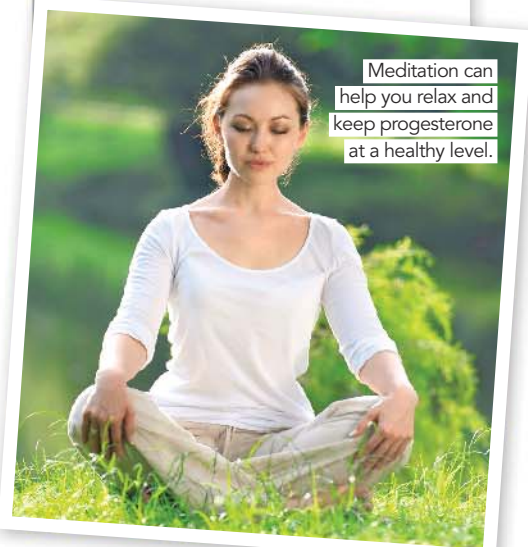
● **Herbs and spices.** Chasteberry, ashwagandha, maca and turmeric can give you a boost. Try Baldwins Vitex Agnus Castus Tincture (£4.29, baldwins.co.uk).

● **Progesterone cream, lozenges, tablets or pessaries.** Progesterone supplements are only available in the UK on prescription if your GP thinks it's clinically appropriate, for example, to treat chronic PMT or menopausal symptoms. Your GP will advise on usage depending on your individual circumstances.

3 Finally, look at lifestyle factors. Try these...

● **Learn to better manage stress.** Stress hormones (cortisol) lower progesterone. Anything you can do to feel more relaxed will help, such as regular exercise, meditation and yoga.

● **Get enough sleep.** Improved sleep will promote more progesterone production, which, in turn, will help you sleep better – simple! So how much sleep should you be getting? The average is 7-8 hours. But if you find you function perfectly well on five hours, that's absolutely fine. The key is that no matter how many hours you sleep, you wake up feeling refreshed. 🧘



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1. Morali G, Polatti F, Metelitsa EN, Mascanuci P, Magnani P, Maré GB. Open, non-controlled clinical studies to assess the efficacy and safety of a medical device in form of gel topically and intravaginally used in postmenopausal women with genital atrophy. Arzneimittelforschung. 2006;56(3):230-8.
Manufacturer: Polichem SA, Via Senago 42D, 6912 Lugano Pazzallo, Switzerland. Authorized Representative: Bioslecta srl, Via G. Marconi 11, 20121 Milan, Italy. Distributor: Cederberg GmbH, 4102 Binningen, Switzerland.

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THE BEST WAY TO GET MOTIVATED is to boost your dopamine levels. This neurotransmitter helps control your brain's reward and pleasure receptors and enables you not only to see rewards, but to take action to move towards them. One of the best ways to 'up' your levels is through diet. Foods to turn you into a productive powerhouse include oily fish, which is high in omega-3s and amino acids. These are essential for brain health and assist with the production of dopamine. Bananas are packed with tyrosine, an amino-acid also essential for dopamine production; and... here's the best one... chocolate! The darker the better where this is concerned, as it contains antioxidants and also a touch of caffeine – a stimulant that boosts your energy and concentration levels – so get stuck in!

TRY THIS...

Dare to Blossom Rediscovery Cards (£12, daretoblossom.co.uk) is a pretty drawstring bag containing 50 cards, each with a single word, such as fun, relaxation, self-love and generosity. These cards are designed to both inspire and motivate you to live by your word for the day, or practise something relating to it.

'Wake up with motivation and determination, go to bed with satisfaction'

Unknown author

GET-GOING TIP!

If you want to be sure you'll motivate yourself to do something, tell someone close to you about your goal. It doesn't have to be big, just something you hope to achieve, such as running a mile. Once you've set a goal and told someone about it, you're bound to be more motivated to reach it – if only to save face!

Motivation – 'A feeling of boundless energy, desire and positivity to go forth and seize the day!'



A-Z OF SEASONAL

IMMUNE BOOSTERS

Stay well all spring with these natural and easy health tips.

NATURE IS WAKING UP all around us – a beautiful mix of sights, sounds and smells. But, this also means dormant germs are waking up too, plus it's time for the first round of seasonal pollen allergens. But, there are many easy ways to ensure your immune system stays healthy and strong, by clearing toxins, reducing inflammation, getting plenty of healthy foods, staying active – and relaxing of course. In fact, it's as easy as ABC (right up to XYZ)!...



Asparagus

A nutrient-dense veg, which is sprouting its first fresh spears now, asparagus contains a compound that breaks down toxins in your body, helping to calm any immune responses that might flare up. Try to have it lightly steamed or raw a couple of times per week.



BASIL This is a naturally antibacterial herb, thanks to orientin and vicenin essential oils within. Brew a tea or sprinkle some leaves on a salad – it'll keep your mouth and throat free from unfriendly bacteria.

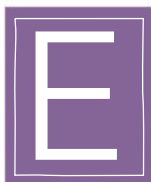
CHOCOLATE More than just a luxury – having a daily dose of chocolate is a treat for your immune system too. It helps to decrease blood pressure, which reduces inflammatory reactions in your body. Stick to cacao rather than regular processed bars for the benefits – we love the organic raw goodness of Lovechock bars (£3.89, natureshealthbox.co.uk).



DOWNWARD DOG

A pose well known in yogic teaching for its 'spring cleaning' powers, hold it for 10 seconds or more to optimise your circulation and lymph drainage, clearing toxins from your system!





CHINACEA

Taking this supplement for a couple of weeks gives you an immunity

boost. 'It's a preventative solution that helps your immune system adapt to the change of the seasons,' says herbalist Jane Exeter.



Freeze!

Take advantage of the brisk April breeze on bare arms, or, embrace a spot of cold water swimming! Short exposure to cold – 15-20 minutes – strengthens your immune system against future stressors.



IGGLE Laughter and amusement increase the activity of immune cells, making them quicker to react against bugs or allergens. It is April Fool time after all!



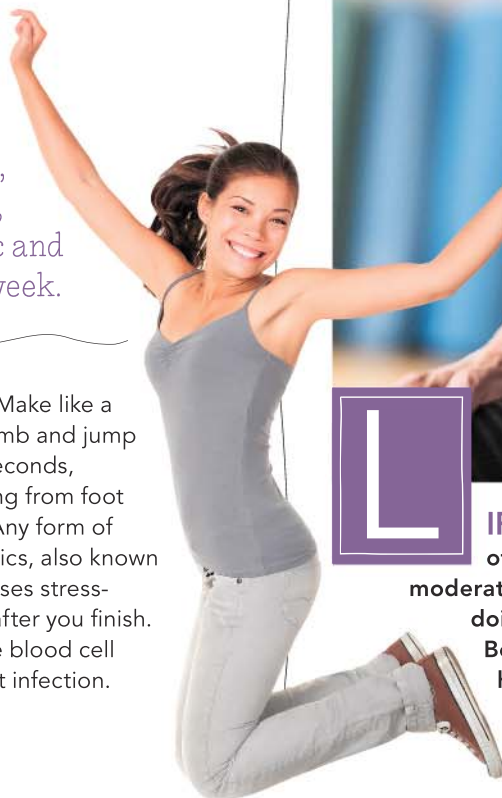
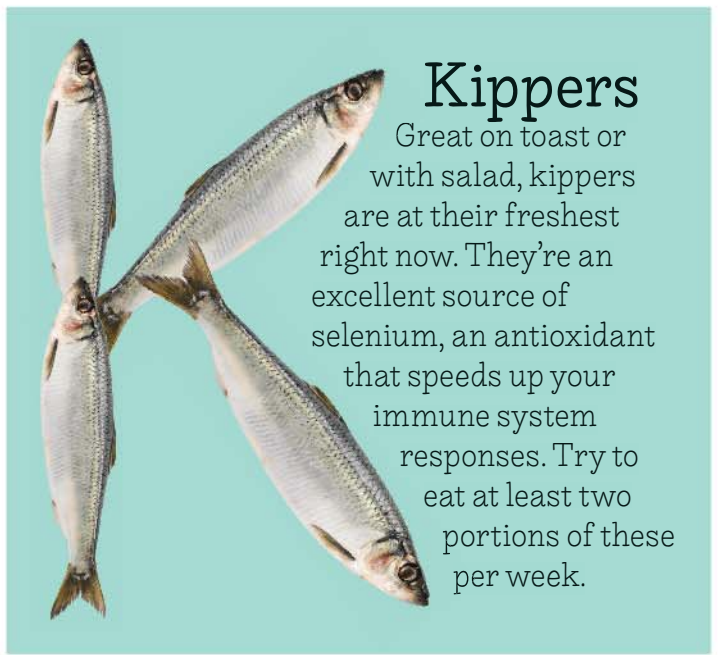
HUGS

Whether from your partner, family, friends or even with your pets, hugs are good for your health. Research from Yale University found people who have affection in their lives had fewer incidences of stress-induced infections.



Inulin This soluble fibre feeds and increases the number of beneficial bacteria in your gut, such as bifidobacteria – and the diversity of your gut bacteria and health of your immune system are intrinsically linked. Try eating 4-5 portions of inulin-rich foods, such as bananas, asparagus, garlic and artichokes, per week.

JUMP! Make like a spring lamb and jump for ten seconds, alternating from foot to foot. Any form of plyometrics, also known as jump training, releases stress-lowering endorphins after you finish. This boosts your white blood cell count to help you fight infection.



Kippers

Great on toast or with salad, kippers are at their freshest right now. They're an excellent source of selenium, an antioxidant that speeds up your immune system responses. Try to eat at least two portions of these per week.



LIFT! A study from Boston University School of Medicine highlighted the benefits of lifting moderate weights, for example 3kg dumbbells, or doing bodyweight workouts three times a week. Because it lowers stress levels, it reduces the hormone cortisol, which can cause inflammation. ▶

Mud New research shows that when you spend time in the garden digging or sowing seeds, microbes are released into the air from the soil that help to strengthen your gut microbiome and increase your tolerance towards other microbes and bacteria.

NAPS These should be embraced, not fought with caffeine! If possible, make use of prime snooze time between 2-3pm, napping for 10-20 minutes – this helps to clear away toxins from your body and brain, creating less work for your immune system.

An afternoon snooze clears away toxins from your body and brain

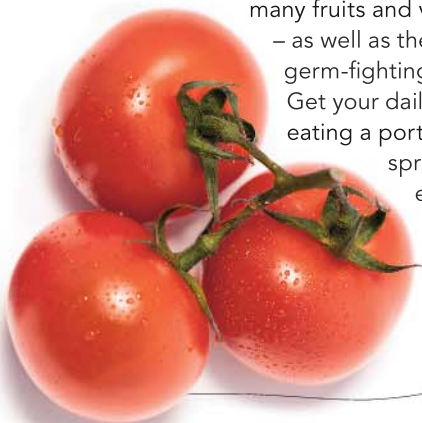
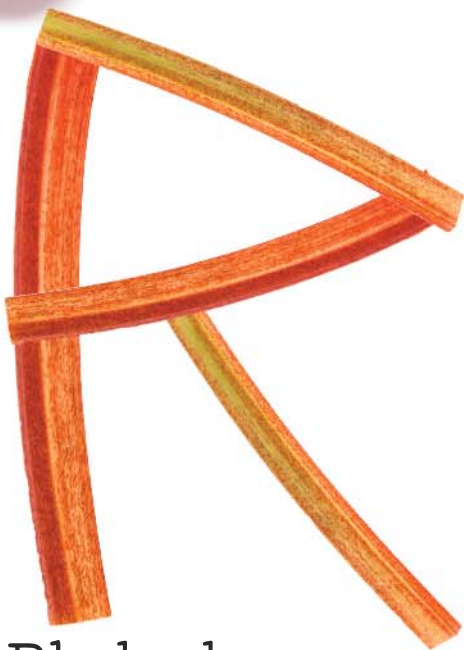


Oregano

This seasonal herb contains rosmarinic acid – a type of immune-assisting antioxidant that's 42 times stronger than the type found in apples. It tastes great in marinades, salads or risotto, so add a liberal tablespoon.

PACKED LUNCHES These have become a new food friend as people realise how many more antioxidants there can be in their own veg-packed midday meal as opposed to grabbing something processed at a café or canteen. For an immune-boosting combo, try wholegrain rye bread topped with natural yoghurt and a rainbow of crudités, then add tinned or smoked mackerel when you're ready to eat.

QUERCETIN This antioxidant belongs to a group of plant pigments called flavonoids, which is what gives many fruits and veg their colour – as well as their disease and germ-fighting attributes. Get your daily quota by eating a portion of either spring greens, early tomatoes, spinach, apples, or purple sprouting broccoli.



Rhubarb

The star of spring puddings, rhubarb is also an excellent source of vitamin C, which is one of the strongest immune-strengthening antioxidants your body receives.

SUNLIGHT In April, sunlight is here for us to enjoy for around 14 hours of the day. It's your most reliable source of vitamin D – an immune strengthening nutrient – and at this time of year you can enjoy 15-20 minutes in the sunshine without sunscreen to experience the best benefits.

TIME OUT Some 'you time' is essential for supporting your body's defences. Each day, consciously destress by, for example, going on a mindful walk, enjoying the sights of the blossom and the blooms all around in nature right now.



UBIQUINONE This is one of the strongest natural disease-fighting antioxidants that your body makes for itself – so-called because it is 'ubiquitous'! Various seasonal nutrients encourage your system to create more, such as those found in spinach, kale, nuts, sardines and salmon.



VIBURNUMS In bloom right now, use a handful to make an immune-boosting tea. 'Also known as 'mother tincture', viburnums contain a range of antioxidants,' says herbalist Jane Exeter. Plus, drinking herbal tea is good for the health of your spleen, which acts as a filter for blood within your immune system.



Wine

Red wine in particular is another great source of the flavonoid quercetin, plus it also contains immune-protecting resveratrol. Have no more than a small glass a day though – any more is counterproductive.



YLITOL Shown in brand new studies to reduce bacterial growth in your body, helping to lighten the load on your

immune system, a little of this natural sweetener goes a long way. Add a sprinkle to sweeten a refreshing, home-made – and vitamin C-rich – lemonade to enjoy on a warm spring day.

YOGHURT Live, probiotic varieties are well worth eating once a day to help boost your beneficial gut bacteria. Add in the first of the seasons' raspberries too – these are prebiotics, which good bacteria feed support your defences.



ZINC This mineral is proven to ward off colds and other sniffles, so dust off the barbecue and throw a couple of steaks on it! One regular-size fillet contains a mouth-watering 30 per cent of your daily needs. •

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Katie Hipwell, Almased® Nutritionist

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- Contains no... artificial flavours, fillers, preservatives or stimulants and only naturally occurring sugars. Non-GMO, gluten-free, vegetarian and suitable for those with Diabetes.

So simple to use!

Mix 50g of Almased® with 200-350ml of water or 200ml of low-fat milk and 2tsp of oil rich in essential fatty acids (e.g. olive, flaxseed, rapeseed or walnut). Flavour your shake by adding cinnamon, unsweetened cocoa powder or extracts such as vanilla or almond.

NUMBER
1
IN GERMANY



Clean eating

Almased® offers a natural blend of soya, yogurt and honey. Our high-quality ingredients contain biologically active components for overall good health, rich in soya isoflavones and more than 80 bioactive peptides from our soya and milk.

Yogurt

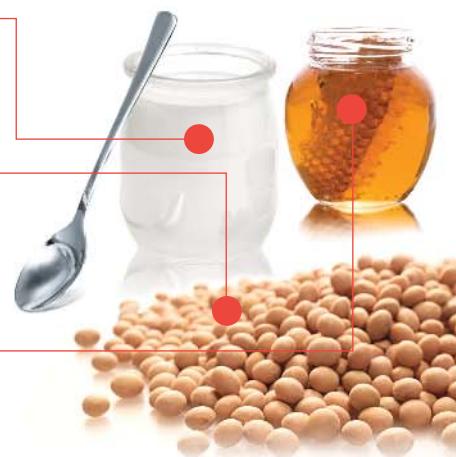
Made from premium quality calcium-rich milk to support digestive function.

Soya

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Enzyme-rich honey

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What's your CARB TYPE?

Staying slim can be as simple as knowing how and when to eat the most suitable carbohydrates for your body. Take our test to see how many and which ones suit you.

DO YOU HAVE ONE OF those friends who can wolf down bagels, cake and pasta and never gain a pound? Scientists have recently discovered that this may be down to more than just luck. They've found that people have huge variations in their levels of a gene that controls production of amylase. 'This enzyme is produced in your mouth when you start chewing food, and it breaks down carbohydrates into their digestible form of simple sugars,' says nutritionist Nathalie Winn. 'If you think of your slim, carb-loving friend, she may have more of the genes that produce amylase.'

When she starts eating her bagel, more of this enzyme is produced, and more carbohydrate is digested in her mouth. This results in a sweeter flavour, so she feels more satisfied and eats less overall.'

Researchers also found that people who produce more amylase are better able to handle sugar once it's digested. Therefore, they're less likely to store the sugar as fat. A recent study found that people with the lowest levels were eight times more likely to be obese than those with the highest.

But, if this isn't you, read on to discover where you lie on the carb sensitivity scale. Then you can start optimising your carbs to shape up for summer!

STEP 1 THE QUIZ

1 Do you feel sleepy or 'foggy' within two hours of eating a high carbohydrate meal or snack such as pasta, sandwiches, baked potatoes, pizza, sweets and chocolate or breakfast cereals?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2 Do you frequently crave sweets or starchy foods such as pasta, rice, cereals, potatoes and fruit?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3 Do you have a hard time controlling how much sugar or starch you eat?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4 Do you often find you don't feel satisfied even after a large meal?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5 Do you tend to gain weight around your middle rather than around your hips?

Yes ☐ No ☐

STEP 2 THE CRACKER TEST

This genetic 'self-test' devised by Canadian scientist Dr Sharon Moalem measures the amount of amylase you produce, and therefore your ability to break down carbs.

- Place a plain, unsalted cracker in your mouth and start timing and chewing. You will need to pay close attention, as the starch in the cracker may already be starting to be digested by amylase in your saliva. Don't swallow.
- As soon as you detect a change in taste to slightly sweeter — it can be quite subtle — or if you reach 30 seconds while timing, stop chewing and note the time.
- Rerun the test twice more for accuracy. Take an average to get your carb type.

Time it takes for the taste to change:

0-14 seconds – score 0

15-30 seconds – score 3

More than 30 seconds – score 6

Now, add your cracker test score to the number of 'yes' responses you had in the quiz to find your carb type.

Rather than committing to a low-carb diet, try optimising your carbs instead.



TOTAL SCORES

0-3

Low
carbohydrate
sensitivity

4-8

Moderate
carbohydrate
sensitivity

9+

High
carbohydrate
sensitivity

Low sensitivity

Lucky you! Because you naturally process carbs more quickly and efficiently, at least half of your diet could come from starchy foods.

Choose unprocessed carbs such as oats, brown rice, fruit, quinoa, whole-grain bread and starchy veg such as root vegetables, peas and sweetcorn. These carbs release sugar more slowly so they will help to keep your energy levels steady, as will serving your carbs with a little lean protein, healthy fat – for example, olive oil, oily fish, avocado, nuts or seeds – and a small amount of green or brightly coloured veggies.

BREAKFAST Try adding amaranth or barley with chia seeds to your porridge.

LUNCH Avocado on rye or wild rice mixed with salmon and edamame peas are nice options.

DINNER Why not try making your own pizza base from spelt or buckwheat flour and topping with veggies and a tomato and pesto sauce?

TOP
TIP

If you struggle to maintain weight, you may benefit from eating smaller high-energy meals more frequently, rather than three square meals per day, and choosing energy dense foods such as unsalted nuts, dried fruit and avocados in-between meals. These keep your energy levels topped up so your body doesn't use fat – or muscle – stores instead.



Once you know your carb type, you can prepare food that helps you be your happiest, healthiest self.

Moderate sensitivity

You have some flexibility when it comes to carbs, but you'll likely benefit from having no more than 40 per cent of your diet as carbohydrate*. Opt for lower starch, low glycaemic index (GI) carbohydrates most of the time.

The glycaemic index looks at how quickly foods release sugar into the blood stream. Low GI foods include grains, such as quinoa and buckwheat, that are naturally higher in protein and have fewer carbs. Choose less starchy veg such as broccoli, green leaves, peppers, mushrooms and courgettes, and lower-sugar fruits such as berries, plums, green apples and pears.

BREAKFAST Choose something with a good amount of protein, a little slow-releasing carbohydrate and some fibre to prevent a



blood sugar rollercoaster throughout the day. The perfect combination would be a slice of rye toast with eggs, a portion of mushrooms or spinach and a little butter or avocado.

LUNCH Sweet potatoes or quinoa are good choices with a serving of lean protein such as chicken, tuna or beans. As an afternoon snack, choose things such as houmous with veggie crudités or kale crisps.

DINNER Don't be tempted to cut carbs out completely as they help you to sleep by stimulating the release of the snoozy neurotransmitter serotonin. Instead choose a palm-size portion of brown rice, buckwheat or starchy vegetables.

TOP TIP Minimise sugar spikes by cooling potatoes and pasta after cooking before eating as this increases the amount of 'resistant starch', which your body digests more slowly.

High sensitivity

You're a sensitive type when it comes to carbs. It's likely that you have lower levels of the gene that produces the enzyme amylase. The good news is that now you know this, you can eat to be your happiest, healthiest self.

Choosing low GI carbs, such as oats, barley and quinoa, will help to keep your blood sugar levels steady. And go for lower-sugar fruits that are on the sour side, such as berries and green apples. Vegetables are great to fill up on, but choose lower starch vegetables such as kale, spinach, broccoli and courgette.

You can also reduce the impact that carbohydrates have on you by always combining with some lean protein such as fish, meat or dairy and a portion of a high-fibre food such as nuts, veggies or seeds. These foods help slow down the release of sugar from the carbohydrates and reduce sugar and insulin spikes.

BREAKFAST A perfect energising breakfast would be avocado or egg and smoked salmon with pumpkin seeds and a buckwheat blini.

LUNCH For a stabilising springtime lunch choose a protein-rich tuna Nicoise salad.

DINNER For a nutritious dinner, a courgette and leek frittata would be perfect.

TOP TIP A simple way to increase the amount of amylase that you produce – to break down more carbohydrate in your mouth – is to chew for longer! That old diet trick of chewing at least 20 times now starts to make more scientific sense! Therefore, avoid any soup or juice diets and instead, choose raw, high-fibre foods that you have to take time eating instead. You could also try Zuccarin (£21, newnordic.co.uk), a natural supplement that helps you metabolise carbs. 🍷



NOW'S THE TIME FOR ENERGY- BOOSTING B5

You'll be firing on all cylinders with a dose of one of the most crucial B vitamins, giving you an energised body, clear mind and healthy heart.



Q HOW DOES B5 KEEP ME ENERGISED?

Your body uses vitamin B5, also known as pantothenic acid, to convert carbohydrates into glucose. After you consume a source, it stays in your body for around three days, so you've got ready stores of energy for when you spring into action.

Q CAN IT HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT?

Because B5 plays a key role in the normal function of energy release, it could also support a normal healthy weight, due to its ability to break down fats. It creates an enzyme known as coenzyme A, which breaks down fat particles in your body.

Q IS IT GOOD FOR MY HEART?

As part of its role in metabolism, B5 also synthesises cholesterol. A study at the Princeton Longevity Center in New Jersey suggests that supplementation of pantothenic acid – which is a form of B5 – lowers 'bad' cholesterol and high triglyceride levels, which improves cardiovascular health.

Q ANY OTHER BENEFITS?

Vitamin B5 is essential for the synthesis of acetylcholine, which goes on to play an important role in the function of brain cell membranes. This means that it helps support normal brain and memory function. Also, as Vitamin B5 supports normal energy function, more energy supports more mental clarity!

Vit B5 improves cardio health and breaks down fats to help support a normal healthy weight too.

WORDS: KATHERINE WATT. PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES.

GET THE BEST SOURCES

It's nigh impossible to take too much B5. Your body will only absorb around 10mg each day, and any that it doesn't use gets excreted. In general though, you only need around 5mg per day, which is easy to get from fresh foods...

STOCK UP ON EGGS AND DAIRY

These foods contain good amounts of B5 thanks to the diets of the animals that produce them. An egg for breakfast will provide 14 per cent of your daily B5 needs, or a small bowl of natural yoghurt will give you 20 per cent.



Feed your B5 levels with mushrooms.

EAT PLENTY OF PLANTS

Plants are a plentiful source of B5, with mushrooms taking the top spot. In particular, shiitake provide half of your daily needs in a 145g portion. The same portion of avocado provides 42 per cent, and if you have that mashed on a baked sweet potato with some broccoli on the side, it takes you up to your full daily requirements.

Sample some supplements

While it's easy to get vitamin B5 from foods, you may want to top up to ensure you have don't have a deficiency. Ideally look for a supplement that has been manufactured to GMP standards in the UK, as this guarantees a quality vitamin B5. Taking it as part of a multivitamin, such as Ultimate Multi Vit (£10.97, silvertownhealth.co.uk), will ensure you optimise the benefits.

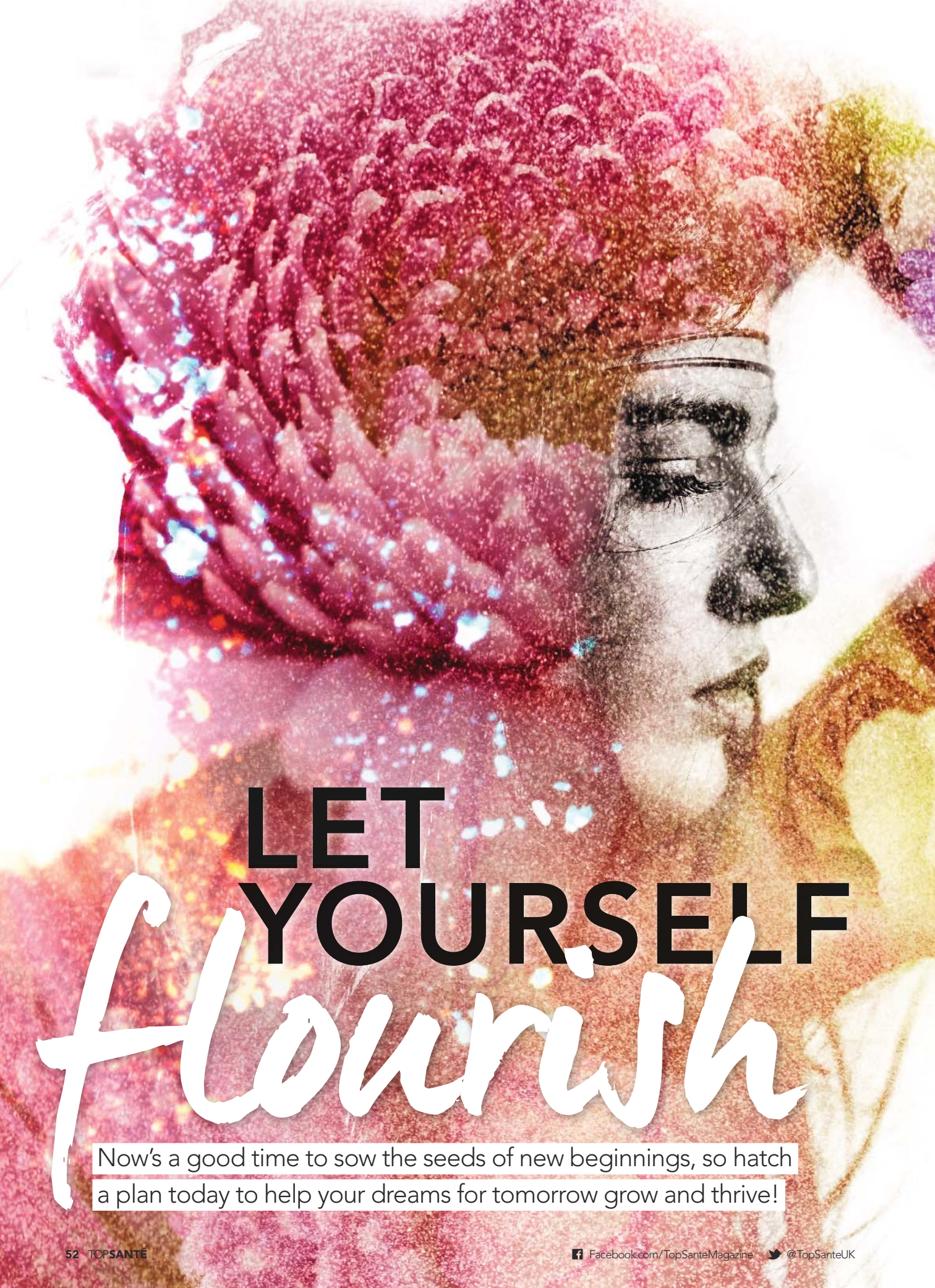
MUNCH ON MEAT AND FISH

Whatever your meat of choice, you're guaranteed a good dose of B5. A regular beef steak or pork chop provides a quarter of your B5 needs for the day. And a regular fillet of trout will also give you a quarter. Other good fish sources include salmon and tuna, so filling the rest of your plate with sweet potato chips and a selection of veggies gives you all the B5 you need for the day.



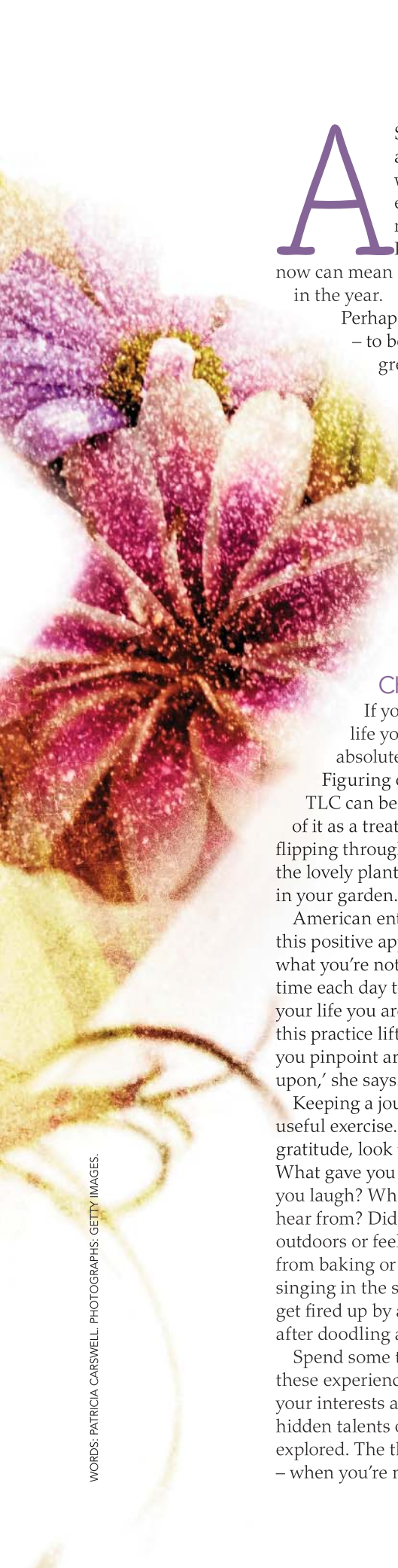
COMPLEMENT IT WITH OTHER NUTRIENTS Enjoy sources of B5 with a sprinkle of magnesium-rich pumpkin seeds. The two nutrients rely on each other to form those energy-boosting enzymes. Also, try adding sliced peppers to dishes – they're rich in vitamin C, which encourages your body to retain B5 for longer.





LET YOURSELF *flourish*

Now's a good time to sow the seeds of new beginnings, so hatch a plan today to help your dreams for tomorrow grow and thrive!



AS THE DAYS GET LONGER and everything in the natural world comes to life again, it's an encouraging season to nurture new beginnings for yourself too. Planting small seeds of change now can mean that you reap rich rewards later in the year.

Perhaps you'd like to boost inner calm – to become more mindful and get greater perspective on your busy life. Or, maybe you'd enjoy the benefits of more confidence and assertiveness. You might want to be more creative or develop new talents. Whatever it is that you want to explore, starting with just the kernel of an idea and a few small actions is the surest way to achieve real growth in the months to come.

CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

If you're not sure what areas of your life you want to develop, that's absolutely fine – in fact, it's great!

Figuring out where you need some inner TLC can be exciting and rewarding. Think of it as a treat – akin to curling up on the sofa flipping through a seed catalogue, imagining the lovely plants that will soon be springing up in your garden.

American entrepreneur Maya Penn is all for this positive approach. Rather than focusing on what you're not happy with, set aside some time each day to ask yourself which parts of your life you are thankful for. 'Not only will this practice lift your mood, but it also helps you pinpoint areas that you may want to build upon,' she says.

Keeping a journal for a few days can be a useful exercise. As you jot down your list of gratitude, look to see what themes emerge. What gave you the most pleasure? What made you laugh? Which people were you pleased to hear from? Did you get a thrill from being outdoors or feel a deep sense of contentment from baking or taking photographs? Did singing in the shower make you joyful? Did you get fired up by a radio debate or feel fulfilled after doodling at your desk?

Spend some time looking more closely at these experiences. What do they tell you about your interests and passions? They might hint at hidden talents or pursuits waiting to be explored. The things you enjoy – or don't enjoy – when you're not actively thinking about

Creating a dream board is a calming and affirming way to help you achieve your goals.

them, and your mind is free to express itself, can be the most telling.

If you're a visual person, you might like to make a dream board – one of the tools Maya recommends in her book *You Got This! Unleash Your Awesomeness, Find Your Path And Change Your World* (£10.99, North Star Way). It could be on a piece of stiff card or even an entire wall. Simply stick on it anything that inspires you, from photos of your last holiday to a joke that made you laugh, a motivational quote or a swatch of fabric that caught your eye. Once you've started filling up your board a little you will see patterns emerging.

'Creating a dream board is more than just a craft project,' says Maya. 'It can become a journey of self-discovery because it can help you focus in on what you are passionate about, what goals you want to accomplish and what changes you want to see in any aspect of your life. It's a very creative, calming and affirming way to align yourself with what's most crucial to focus on in your life, what next steps you should take towards accomplishing your goals and what inspires you to keep moving forward.'

Once you've worked out what seeds of change you want to grow, mark your decision in some way so you signal your intention to yourself. Write it on a sticky note and put it on your mirror, jot it in your diary or set it as a screensaver for your phone – wherever you're most likely to see it. It'll help you get started and ignite your enthusiasm.

TENDING YOUR SEEDLINGS

Now you've planted your intentions, you must nurture them regularly, but also be patient and allow time for them to emerge in their own time. No seed grows in one big burst, they unfurl slowly and then, once they're above the ground, they may have an exciting growth spurt! Map a realistic time frame in which you might see results, and think about smaller milestones to aim for along the way.

Integrative coach-therapist Eve Menezes Cunningham recommends having little rewards as you go along. 'It's essential to help you stay focused and motivated,' she says. 'If your overall goal is something quite big, you deserve a big reward when you reach it, but in the meantime, create smaller treats to

encourage you along the way. The anticipation of the reward boosts the release of feel-good hormone dopamine, so you'll get more motivation as you crave the next one. Honour each step, however tiny it seems.'

Ensure you document your progress too. This could be in your journal, dream board or any other way that helps you move forward. Eve suggests a system of symbols representing each goal. 'Each night before bed, jot down a symbol to show how on track you've been each day,' she says. 'It may be as simple as using a letter related to your goal – for example 'f' for fitness – then next to it add a symbol that shows how you've done that day, such as a smiley face if you've done all you hoped. Play around with it and see what works for you.'

It can be useful to enlist help from others, both to make yourself accountable and to have a support team who will keep you going, ensuring you stay keen to keep your ideas flourishing. By sharing your plans with a few friends, it creates a group dynamic that can make a huge difference to your chances of success. A study by the department of psychology at Dominican University, Illinois,

found that 70 per cent of people working towards certain goals who sent weekly updates to a friend reported successful goal achievement, compared with 35 per cent of those who kept their goals to themselves.

NURTURING YOUR PROJECT

However you go about your goals, you may naturally find that you start to falter in your good habits after a few months. But, it's important to stay committed to change if you're to get those seeds to take root. 'It's easy to lose focus after the initial burst of enthusiasm,' says Eve. 'Every time we do something different, we're creating new neural pathways in the brain and that's harder than carrying on doing the same things we've always done. Imagine your brain as an overgrown garden. The well-worn paths through it are the things you're doing already. The new pathway will take time to clear at first – but you can do it! Each time you tread this new path, you're potentially rewiring your brain. It takes effort, consistency and patience but it really works.'

If it's a big dream and you feel a little unsure at times, you may find Maya's

Tend to your idea
seedlings by continually
taking action to support
their growth.



favourite mantra helpful. When she's feeling nervous, she tells herself, 'Do it afraid' – a phrase she learned from her mother. 'It's very powerful. It can be applied to a multitude of areas of our lives, especially in times when we're starting to make changes,' says Maya.

ENJOYING THE HARVEST

Above all, make sure you keep your mind focused on your bountiful goal. Visualise how you'll look and feel when you've achieved it, right down to the last detail, adding in colours, scents and sounds to make your mental picture even more real.

As time passes and your project's seedlings are growing into something really beautiful – getting closer to flowering into beautiful blooms – adapt your dream board or notebook to become more of a gratitude journal, documenting the progress you're perceiving and recording your experience.

Some of the strongest seedlings flourish best when they are thinned out to allow the others to grow stronger. It's the same with your goals. Don't be afraid to cut back or adapt if something isn't working. 'Sometimes, when we aren't making the progress we had hoped, re-examining our goals can help us understand where we can cut back on efforts that don't feel worth it,' says Eve. 'By doing this, we have more energy to focus where it will make a bigger difference, which can be revitalising and energising.'

Most of all, remember to celebrate your achievements. You've worked hard, choosing which seeds to grow and tending your plot with care, so when it comes to harvest time – celebrating that goal – be sure to enjoy the fruits of your labour. The biggest reward for every gardener is that moment when she sits down in her garden and appreciates the beauty she has created. So be sure to take time to marvel at the wonderful areas in which you've grown and achieved – you deserve it. 🍷

FITNESS

Get a move on with the latest kit and a charty swim.

GET A SPRING IN YOUR STEP

As the weather lightens up so can your footwear. The New Balance Fresh Foam Zante v3 (£95, newbalance.co.uk), its name inspired by the Greek beaches of Zante, is incredibly lightweight.

This is ideal if you're a neutral runner – your heel strikes the ground first, then your foot rolls only slightly inward and then onto the toes – who wants to start upping the pace. The moulded sock liner is smooth around the foot so no joins dig in, the upper has a breathable mesh and the hexagons on the sole provide grip. You'll feel like you're walking on air.



3 OF THE BEST... muscle relaxers

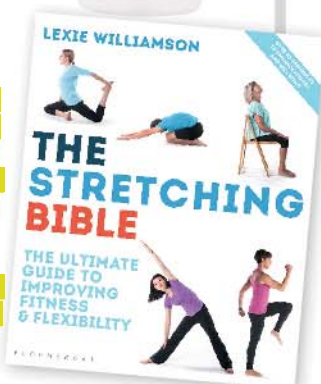
Loosen up your limbs to help you feel good!



If you run, cycle or walk to work, you might not always have time to stretch and relieve any muscle tension afterwards. Calmia Stress Relief Travel Roller (£19.95, calmia.com) is lightweight and only 30cm long, so you can pop it in your bag, then use it to massage your muscles. Just position the part of your body that needs some TLC on top of the roller and move slowly back and forth.

After a workout, reward your limbs with Ragdale Hall Spa Time to Be Active Muscle Reboost Warming Gel (£8.50, marksandspencer.com). Squeeze it onto your skin then massage in with the roller head and you'll feel your muscles being warmed and revived. Alongside the active warming ingredient, SenseHot, it contains avocado and chia seed to nourish skin.

A good stretch can make all the difference to your workout and recovery, but many of us aren't sure how to do it properly. The *Stretching Bible* by yoga instructor Lexie Williamson (£16.99, Bloomsbury) provides warm-up and cool-down stretches divided by sports, including running, cycling and swimming. And there are stretches tailored to your situation, whether you need a morning wake-up stretch, a stress-reducing stretch or one to prepare you for sleep. You can also target specific body parts.



EVENT OF THE MONTH

LAPPING IT UP

Swimming is not only an effective all-over workout, it can be a lot of fun, especially if you join this year's Swimathon, from 7-9 April, which sees people swimming in 600 pools across the UK to raise money for Marie Curie. Whatever your ability, there's a distance you can tackle: 1.5k (60 lengths of a 25m pool), 2.5k (100 lengths) or 5km (200 lengths). You can do an individual swim or take part in a team swim of 1.5k or 5k, or even set a distance of your own. You get three hours to complete your challenge and a medal to reward your achievement! It's £13 for an individual swim and £26 for a team, swimathon.org.

HERO OF THE MONTH

Asics Zero Distraction Bra (£48, asics.com).

Exercise in perfect comfort with hi-tech sports underwear.

An adjustable front shoulder strap makes it easier to change once you've got it on.

Padded straps don't dig in and they relieve stress on your shoulders.

It's been shown to reduce bounce by 60 per cent!

Designed for high-impact sports, moulded cups compress each breast and increase support.

Made with breathable materials plus mesh zones at the back for ventilation.

No more rubbing marks here thanks to the individual fit.



Walking has been a revelation for us!

Three readers share how walking has transformed their lives in unexpected ways – perhaps it'll inspire you too!

'WE CALL OURSELVES THE GLAMORAKS!'

Melissa Talago, 43, from York, Yorkshire, has found that walking is a great way to spend time with friends and make new ones, too.

ONE WEEKEND, THREE YEARS ago, my husband Chris went away with our sons Josh, 13, and Jamie, 11, and for the first time in as long as I could remember, I had two whole days to myself. Instead of working or doing jobs at home, I had some proper 'me time' and took myself off to the coast for some walking. I used to love long country walks but I'd hardly done any since we'd moved to a city and had two young children.

LADIES WHO WALK

That weekend I did a 14-mile stretch of the Cleveland Way from Whitby down to Ravenscar, staying in a youth hostel overnight. The wind was howling and the rain was horizontal but I put on my walking boots and went for it. It felt so liberating!

When I got home, I posted some pictures of my adventure on Facebook. I said I'd like to make it a regular thing and asked whether anyone would be interested in joining me. Three other mums

said they'd like to come, so a few months later, we walked another part of the Cleveland Way from Staithes to Whitby.

From then on, I organised a walking weekend every couple of months and with each one, the number of women who came along grew. We decided that our group needed a name, so we came up with 'the glamoraks' (glamoraks.com). It's very tongue in cheek but we like to think we are quite a young and glam bunch – even though we wear walking boots and anoraks!

Walking gives us a chance to get away from it all in beautiful countryside. It's very sociable and fun as well as being good exercise. Our biggest group was in February last year when a group of 16 of us went to The Lakes.

GOOD FOR IDEAS

As well as the weekend group walks, it's also inspired me to get out more in the week. I have my own marketing business and generally work from home. It can feel isolating, so several times a month I meet up with friends who also have their own business. A couple of miles along the river in the morning really clears my head and is a way of brainstorming and bouncing ideas off each other. I've also incorporated it into my business by taking clients out, too.

MELISSA'S TIPS

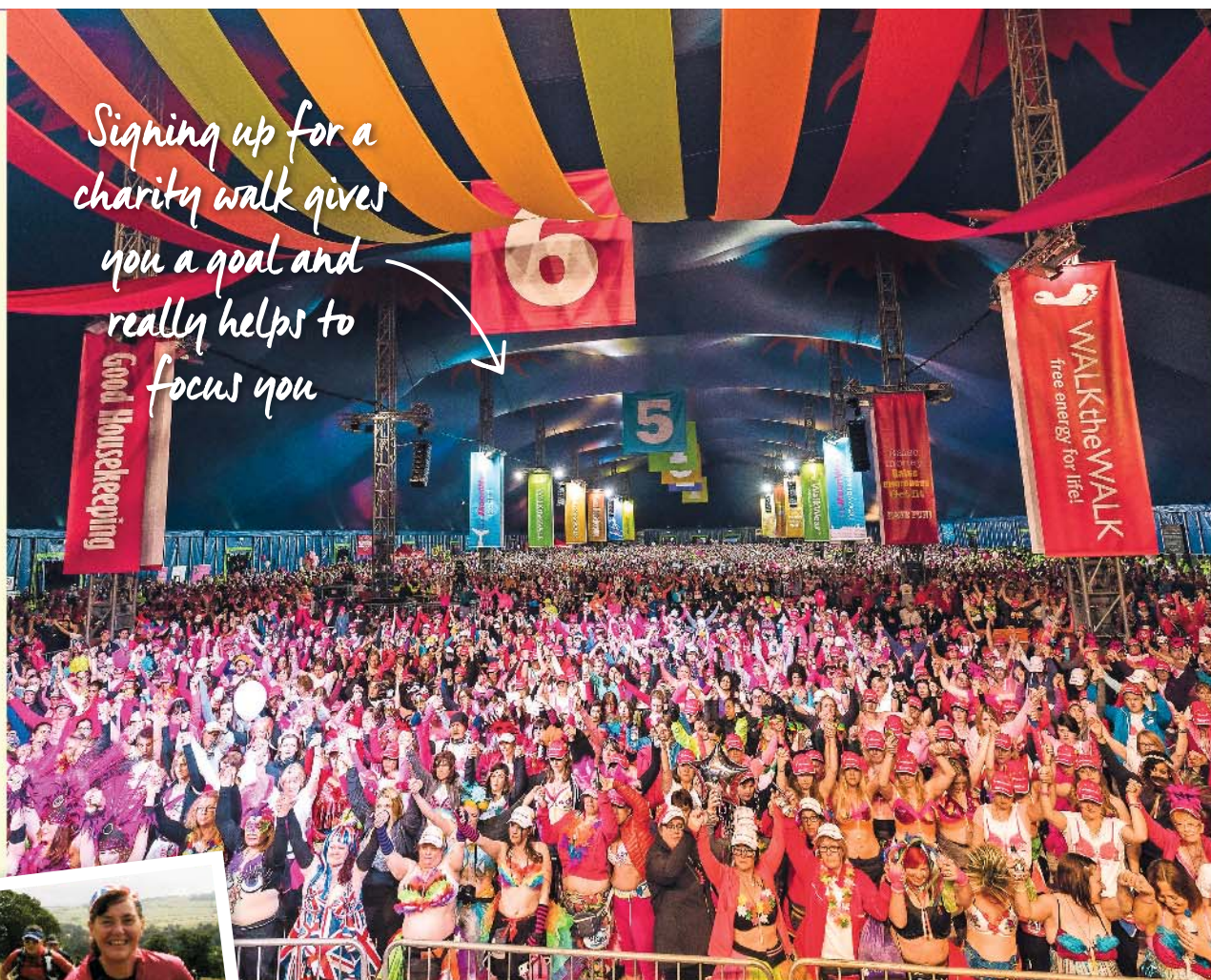
- **Invest in a good pair of boots, socks and a waterproof jacket.**
- **If you've never walked before, choose a short circular route of five miles or less. Take a map or directions so you don't get lost.**
- **To really get the sense of going on an adventure, look at some of the national trails and do two days walking with an overnight stay. Youth hostels are cheap and are not just for teenage backpackers! They're a lot better than most people realise and cost from around £14 for a bed.**
- **Don't be put off by the weather. I prefer walking in the cold and wet than on a sunny warm day – it's more invigorating, promise!**



Melissa has a new lease of life thanks to walking and her 'Glamorak' group.



Signing up for a charity walk gives you a goal and really helps to focus you



‘IT BOOSTS MY MOOD AND HELP KEEPS ME POSITIVE.’

For Maxine Grimshaw from Ramsbottom, Lancashire, walking has helped her keep a positive outlook.

IT WAS SIGNING UP FOR THE MoonWalk ten years ago that first got me into walking. It looked like great fun as well as raising money for the Walk the Walk breast cancer charity. I knew walking 26 miles through the night was going to be tough and I was fairly apprehensive about doing it. However, as I started the training and made myself go for regular walks, I found I really enjoyed it. To my surprise, I was quite fast – in fact I could walk almost as fast as some people run.

MAXINE'S TIPS

- Sign up for a charity walk – having a goal really helps to focus you.
- Visit walkthewalk.org to find tips on technique and local walking buddies.
- Start small with a mile or two and then increase it from there until you reach a comfortable distance.

I could tell it was really good for me physically – it got the blood pumping and was good for my heart and lungs. What I wasn't prepared for were the mental health benefits.

A NEW ROUTINE

Since I was a teenager I've had clinical depression and I manage it with medication. I run my own business designing and making wedding dresses, which is incredibly stressful and I work very long hours, which doesn't leave much time for

anything else. But because I'd committed to the MoonWalk, I knew I had to do the training, so I went out walking 2-3 times a week, with a longer walk at the weekends.

The more I walked, the more it made a massive difference to my mental health. Depression can anchor me to the sofa and make me feel very negative, but walking gave me a reason to get my trainers on and get out there. The sense of achievement when I'd done a walk gave me a real buzz. Gradually, I was even able to cut down on the medication I was taking.

Doing the MoonWalk itself was unbelievable. Walking through London in a bra at night with thousands of other women sounds strange but it was so uplifting and inspiring. As soon as I'd reached the finish line with my partner Diane and our friend Jan, we signed up for the following year and I was determined to carry on walking.

GETTING FRIENDS INVOLVED

To give me extra motivation, I started a local walking group, which I called 'walkB4Urun'. Friends who lived locally came along and they brought other people with them – at one point there were 30 of us going out. We were all walking to get fit and it was more than just a casual stroll around the park.

I've done four MoonWalks in the past ten years as well as other charity walks and I'm doing another this year. All these events have inspired me to keep walking and it's become part of my life. I like to go out first thing in the morning and then I can start work with a clear head feeling refreshed.

At the weekend I'll go for a longer walk in the Lake District. It's really therapeutic and too remote to have a phone signal so you really feel like you're getting away from it all.

If I've been having a really busy time at work and I haven't managed to get out for a regular walk then I can really tell by my mood. It's become a natural stress reliever.



'POWER WALKING HAS TRANSFORMED MY BODY.'

Alice Ducey, 54, from Sevenoaks, Kent, credits power walking classes for helping her lose four stone.

THREE YEARS AGO I DECIDED things needed to change. I worked full-time as a medical rep and spent a lot of time in the car. I didn't exercise and my weight crept up to 16 stone and I was a size 20. I realised that I wasn't healthy.

Running seemed to be the one thing that everyone did to get fit so I signed up for a beginner's course. However, I found it impossible. After ten minutes I was so out of breath, I felt like I was going to collapse. I did four sessions before I gave up. My instructor saw how much I was struggling and suggested that I did a power walking course

instead. I'd never thought of walking as being intensive enough to help you get fit or lose weight but I was willing to give it a go.

I signed up with Sevenoaks Ladies

Joggers (sevenoaksladiesjoggers.co.uk) and from the very first session, I loved it. We did an hour's walk through Knole Park, which is very hilly. I was at the back for the entire class and I had to stop several times to catch

my breath when we were walking up steep hills but everyone was very supportive. The faster walkers just did an extra loop while I caught up. I enjoyed it so much more than running and it put much less pressure on my joints.

I enjoy walking so much and it's gentler on my joints than running.



SEEING THE CHANGE

The instructor was a very inspiring, super-fit 71-year-old who taught us proper technique such as making sure you use your arms to help propel you along. The following morning after my first class, my bottom and legs ached and I really felt like I'd had a workout.

Each week I set myself small, achievable goals, such as not stopping on a hill until I got past a certain tree. As the months passed, I felt so much fitter and my body shape began to change. It inspired me to revamp my diet too.

After six months of power walking I realised how far I'd come when some new people started and they

were the ones at the back while I was waiting for them at the top of the hill. Even on the steepest inclines, I didn't need to stop anymore.

I've been power walking for three years now and my body is so much more toned and I'm down to a size 12-14. I do two power walking classes a week – on a Wednesday night and a Saturday morning. Depending on how fast the group is, we cover anything from 3-5 miles in an hour.

Going to a class really helps to motivate me and when there's group of us, it means we all keep up a good pace. It's changed my mindset and has made exercise a habit and part of my life. I look forward to a power walk – it's a highlight of my week!

ALICE'S TIPS

- Just ten minutes walking a day can make a difference – you don't need masses of time.
- Vary the incline and try to include hills in your route.
- Sign up to a power walking class or course or go with someone else – it

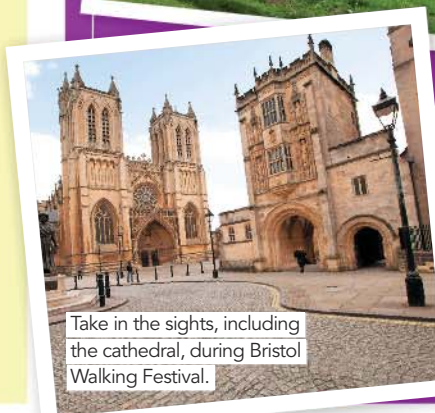
- gives you extra motivation.
- You should be walking fast, as if you're on a mission, but not be so breathless that you can't hold a conversation.
- When you're walking, keep your shoulders as relaxed

- as possible and don't clench your fists. Pretend that you're holding two eggs in your palms and propel your arms to help you go faster.
- Take water and layer up so you can remove layers as you get warmer.

WALK THIS WAY

If you fancy giving walking a try this spring, check out these events...

- Ulverston WalkFest in the Lake District, 22 April-1 May. For more information, visit ulverstonwalkfest.co.uk.
- The MoonWalk London, 13 May. Visit walkthewalk.org.
- Walk Fest 2017 in the North York Moors, 27-29 May. For more information, visit northyorkmoors.org.uk.
- Bristol Walking Festival, 1-31 May. Find out more at visitbristol.co.uk.



JOIN THE *TOP SANTÉ* READER PANEL!

Calling all readers! We're inviting you to get involved in *Top Santé*.

BY JOINING OUR READER panel, you'll be able to play a part in shaping the content of the magazine.

Your views matter to us, and with your help we can make sure *Top Santé* delivers exactly what you and other readers want.

As stated in our manifesto at the start of the magazine, we're here to provide practical, doable advice to help you take small steps towards improved health and fitness. We're not into fads or drastic weight loss diets, but want to help you stay healthy for the long term with natural, simple solutions. We aim

to educate about the health topics that matter most to you, while also helping you feel uplifted, inspired and happy about life.

All it takes to be part of our panel is a quick email with your details. We'll be in contact roughly once a month, possibly more, with a few questions, and there's no obligation to reply to them all.

We may even ask for your suggestions and tips that can be published in the magazine*.

I look forward to speaking to you very soon!

Katy Editor



HOW TO JOIN
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of birth and
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It's Mel on Magic!



Magic

Mel Giedroyc
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(£25, ellesse.co.uk).

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£44, asics.com/gb).

Zipped Short
Sleeve Running
T-shirt (£5.50,
karrimor.com).

USA Pro Seamless
Tank Top (£6.50, usapro.co.uk).

Green Body Barrier
Cycling Shorts (£44.95,
bodybarrier.co.uk).

Reflective Yellow
Fluor headband
/scarf (£21.25,
buffwear.co.uk).

Spring KIT EDIT

Feel revved up and raring to
go with our pick of the latest
bright and beautiful fitness
wear to add zing to
your workouts!

Yellow Manhattan Portage
Cordura Lite backpack
(£85, manhattanportage.co.uk).

Active Zipped Plunge Bra
(£28, wiggle.co.uk).

Fitness-Mad Green
Neoprene Dumbbells (£7.59,
discount-supplements.co.uk).

Vazee Pace v2 running shoe
(£100, newbalanceco.uk).

Viper/Green CEP Run
Ultralight Socks
(£50, cepsports.co.uk).

Haglöfs Heron Hood
(£90, haglofs.com/gb/en).

COMPILED BY KATHERINE WATT.



HOLIDAY *with a difference*

Fancy a holiday somewhere warm, with stylish accommodation, a chance to laze by the pool and a whole host of sports and activities? Club La Santa offers the perfect balance of family fun time and fitness.



Enjoy one of the many fitness classes including body conditioning (top), Pilates (middle) and aerobics (below).



CLUB LA SANTA IS AN activity holiday destination on the stunning North-West coast of Lanzarote, where you'll find more than 40 different sports and activities, from cycling and tennis to windsurfing, all included in the accommodation price.

There's also a packed programme of daily classes including Pilates, Zumba, ballroom dancing, yoga and much, much more.

At Club La Santa, there really is something for everyone, whether you want to get up and be active or prefer to take it easy – you can do as much or as little as you like!

TOP SPORTS FACILITIES

The first-class facilities and coaching are available for all, whether you're a family looking for fitness fun or a group of friends

looking to get a little more out of a holiday. So relax in the sun, take a dip in one of the three 50m pools, book into a class or grab one of the free-to-hire Cannondale bikes and enjoy exploring the dramatic volcanic landscape or breathtaking ocean views.

A STYLISH STAY

Club La Santa offers a variety of places to get your head down, from stylish self-catering accommodation in the shape of newly refurbished apartments to top-class suites. There's also a selection of restaurants and bars with entertainment, as well as a Wellness Centre offering a wide range of relaxation and beauty treatments. There is also a Jacuzzi and hydrotherapy bath to rejuvenate mind and body. And with flights departing from a range of UK airports, it really is #MoreThanAHoliday.

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It's time to get your spring on by embracing the resurgence of the mini trampoline – this is one rebound decision you'll never regret! ▶

Bouncing YOUR WAY TO FITNESS

SUNSHINE AND blue skies always give you an extra spring in your step – but why stop there? You could be

positively jumping for joy if you take advantage of the mini trampoline's comeback. What's more, new research on this form of exercise – known as rebounding – shows it can boost your happy hormones and fitness levels in as little as five minutes a day.

The best kind of exercises for women to stay fit and healthy are weight-bearing ones, which improve muscle tone, maintain lean mass and help with long-term bone health. Rebounding is unique in that it counts as weight-bearing, and is also low impact, giving you an effective all-over full-body workout without stressing your joints. Even NASA says rebounding is 'the most efficient and effective exercise yet devised!'

The technique doesn't involve any daunting flips or tucks like you'd see people

do on a regular trampoline. Rebounding is much simpler to master, while also being more effective for toning up your muscles and core.

'It's all about the downward push through the balls of the feet,' says James Winfield, master trainer at Rebound UK. 'You need to keep your knees soft and bend forwards slightly at the hip, then do a small jump no more than six inches high. At the bottom of the bounce, your body weight can be up to 3.24 times heavier than normal, while at the top you are weightless, which is what creates the fitness benefits.'

The physical results of rebounding don't stop at toning your main muscle groups – your inner pelvic floor muscles will also tighten up! The constant challenge

of the unstable surface means your deep core muscles tense and strengthen. It also gently challenges the postural muscles that help stabilise your spine, encouraging good posture and better back health.

Rebounding even activates your body's lymphatic system to help drain away toxins and support your immune system, so you really are getting healthier through and through.

GET BOUNCING

You don't need to find a class to get started. The compact kit makes it ideal for using at home or in your garden as you can easily store it away, but do look out for an official rebounder with a good quality mat (which is the centre bit) and strong springs, such as The Maximus Pro Rebounder (£199, rebound-uk.com).

'It comes with a storage carry bag, stability bar, resistance bands, sand weights and a rebounding DVD for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels of training,' says James.

Rebounding is also ideal for fitting into a busy lifestyle. Even just five minutes before you go to work is

great – and it'll give your mind and body an uplifting start to the day. Between 5-15 minutes gives you a good cardiovascular workout and toning benefits, while 30 minutes a day or more helps you lose weight and build even more strength. If you want to increase the intensity, add in some explosive plyometric exercises such as squat jumps on the rebounder, or add extra resistance using resistance bands. DVDs such as *Bounce For Beginners* (£12.99, amazon.co.uk), or a search on YouTube will show you how.

5-MIN TONE-UP!

It's not all about bouncing on two feet – try these rebounding moves recommended by Vikki Gamblen, master trainer at Rebound UK.

Rebounding gives you an effective all-over full-body workout without stressing your joints, and encourages better back health.



TRY THE PLANK

Get a flatter tummy by doing this isometric plank challenge on your rebounder. It's a full-body move that works all your core muscles including hip flexors, shoulders and legs.

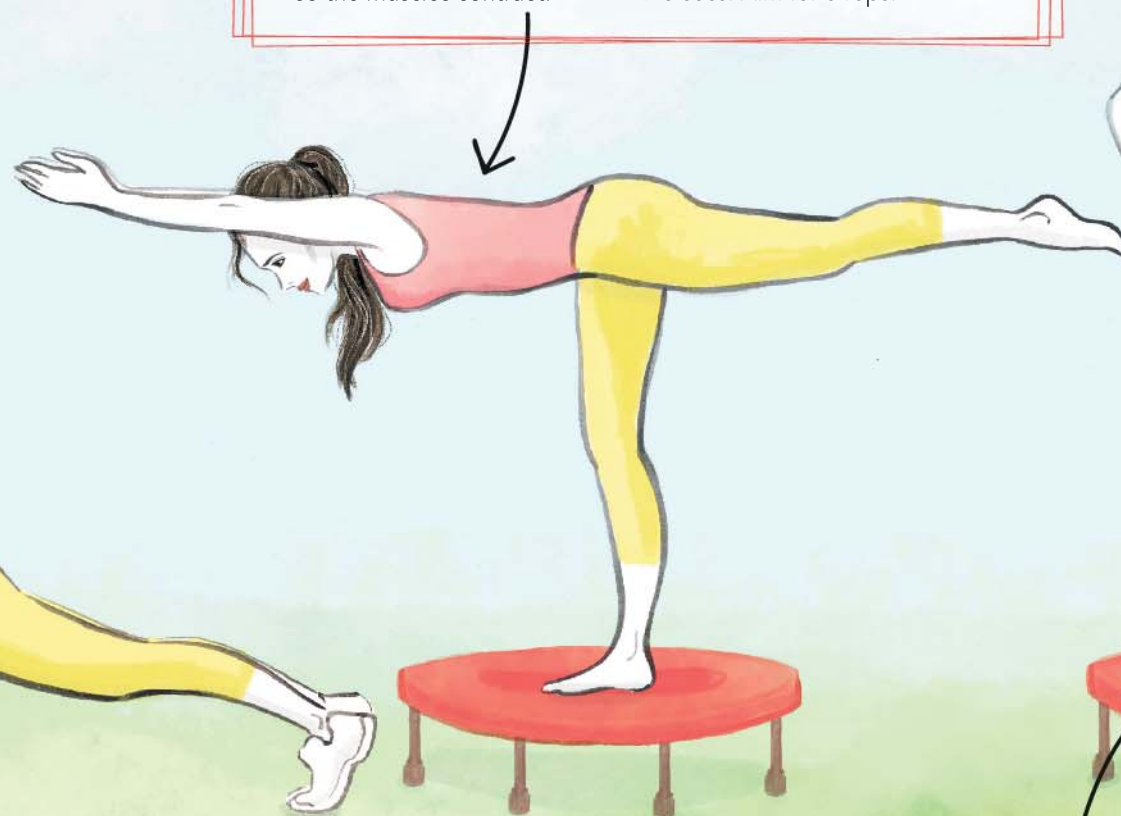
● With your elbows resting on the mat (centre bit) of the rebounder and your feet on

GET THE BALANCE

Single leg deadlifts on the rebounder will tone and lift your bottom and keep your back strong and healthy. It also strengthens your core.

- Stand on one leg in the centre of the rebounder.
- Extend the other leg behind you and squeeze your bottom so the muscles contract.

- Slowly bend forward from your hips, maintaining a slight bend in your supporting knee, with your chest lifted. With your arms stretched out in front, lower yourself slowly until your fingertips touch the outside rim of the rebounder.
- Hold for 3 secs, then slowly straighten up for another 3 secs. Aim for 8 reps.



the floor, maintain a straight line from your head to your toes. Keep your chin tucked in.

● Draw your belly button gently up towards your spine to help activate your deep abdominal muscles and support your lower back. Be sure to keep your breathing going.

● Build up to a one-minute hold, rest for a minute and repeat 2-3 times.

Just five minutes before you go to work will give your mind and body an uplifting start to the day.

RUN FOR IT

Running on the spot on your rebounder is a great low-impact alternative to traditional road running. This joint-friendly cardio training will work your core and pelvic floor, and improve your joint stability.

- Alternate 30 seconds of fast running with slower paced running with a high knee lift. Aim for 3 reps. 🏃

Think yourself FIT

The key to boosting your exercise mojo could be closer to home than you think... in your own head! Here's how to train your brain so you stay fit and healthy forever...

AS THE SEASON OF hope and fresh starts begins, it's prime time to unfurl your body, reset your brain and get out there. It can be tricky to get going again after winter, but recent research shows that it's about mastering the right mental attitude when it comes to getting those legs moving!

'Belief shifts perception in powerful ways,' explains Jonathan Ross, behaviour change specialist and trainer at the American Council on Exercise (ACE). 'If you don't exercise in the right frame of mind, it can seem like an arduous experience. But a feeling of competence engenders enjoyment, which engenders enthusiasm, which

means you do it better, feel better and actually get better as a result!'

A positive mindset is all-important when it comes to unleashing your motivation mojo, say new studies from Humboldt University of Berlin. Focusing on the feeling of competence Jonathan described – the sense of achievement you get from being able to exercise well – was revealed as one of the prime movement motivators. Socialising while working out, and enjoying the adventure of trying something new, also ranked high on the motivation list.

So take advantage of the mood-boosting effects of longer, brighter days, and use the following motivating mindsets to help you retrain your brain to love exercise – for good!

WORDS: CATHY STRUTHERS, DR RHONDA COHEN IS AUTHOR OF *SPORT PSYCHOLOGY: THE BASICS – OPTIMISING HUMAN PERFORMANCE* (£19.99, BLOOMSBURY).
PHOTOGRAPHS: JUMP PHOTO, ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES.

MOTIVATING MINDSET:

I've always got time for exercise

If you want to transform an occasional workout into a regular ritual, place exercise at the top of your to-do list. Schedule it in your diary and make it non-negotiable – you are worth the time after all! Studies show that if there's something on your daily timetable you're reluctant to do, get it done first thing. It increases your sense of achievement, energy levels, and of course it means you're less likely to cancel because it's all done before the day gets going.

If you do experience a couple of blips, it's important not to beat yourself up about it. Sometimes you really might be too busy or too tired to exercise. It helps to keep a journal to log when you really are feeling too busy, or when you're simply putting it off. This way you can monitor your own progress and ensure this method/timing is working for you.

'The key to smashing excuses that get in the way of exercising lies in your mind,' says Jonathan. 'Making the switch is a two-step process. First, change your perception of exercise from one of obligation, i.e. "I should exercise", to one of opportunity, "This is something I enjoy". Secondly, look for opportunities to do what you can with exercise, rather than focusing on the obstacles that might prevent you.'

Again, putting pen to paper is your friend! Imagine the busyness hurdle, and make a plan to overcome it. So, for example, 'if I feel exhausted after work, I'll schedule to run in my lunch hour tomorrow'. An extra incentive is that research shows exercising at lunch makes you more productive for the rest of the day!

SMALL BURSTS

On the days you really find it hard to find an exercise slot, just try to do something; even a little movement has big effects on health. Recent research from Oregon State University shows the cumulative effect of small bursts of activity across the day is as good for your health as a longer 30-minute exercise session each day. 'People get it in their minds that if they don't get that 30 minutes, they might as well not exercise at all,' says study author Brad Cardinal. 'You don't have to exercise to the point of getting out of breath to see health benefits. A comfortably paced walk or bike ride to the train station will do the trick.'

*A positive mindset
is all-important
when it comes
to making exercise
a regular habit*

MOTIVATING MINDSET:

I love learning new things

If you think of exercise as a fun, intriguing adventure, rather than a necessary chore, studies show you are far more likely to keep it up. What's more, if you mix it up, not only will you beat boredom, but you're less likely to hit a fitness plateau. When you change workouts regularly, you are more likely to enjoy them and more likely to carry on hitting your fitness goals as your body adapts to different challenges.

So, think about what you currently do. Are there still things to learn? Does it excite you? No one is born naturally hating physical activity, so if you're not enjoying your regular workout anymore, there are bound to be other things out there to make you smile. Try different settings, different intensity, social situations, even different terrains – you may find you love rowing or rock climbing! Plus, a growing body of research suggests that learning a new physical skill can increase grey matter in the part of your brain related to movement control.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Another sure-fire way to stick with it is to believe in yourself! It's a simple piece of advice, but one of the best. Research shows that people who express confidence in their ability to exercise and meet their fitness goals were far more likely to succeed. 'Self-efficacy – believing you can do it – is the most important factor in sticking with exercise,' says Dr Anthony Papathomas, lecturer in exercise psychology at Loughborough University.

'Do you feel competent enough to fulfil your goals? Help yourself by setting achievable goals, looking for past experiences that prove you can do it and try to seek out role models with a similar exercise history to you who have had success in meeting their goals,' advises Dr Papathomas.

Visualisations and affirmations are also useful at building confidence in your own ability. Try visualising yourself succeeding at each new workout you try, and repeat positive affirmations such as 'I can do it'. Practised daily, you will foster belief in your abilities to learn new things. Believe you are more than capable, and the chances are you'll succeed.





Workout buddies
can help to
spur you on

MOTIVATING MINDSET:

Friends can rely on me

If you want to ensure you never skip an exercise session, then sign up for the social side. Whether you meet a friend at an exercise class, go for parkruns or join a netball team, you are less likely to bail out if someone is waiting for you to show up. Having a workout buddy can spur you on to work harder, especially if your partner is more capable than you! One study found that women exercised longer when cycling next to a more capable partner than when alone.

The power of connecting with others doesn't stop there. Research shows that even a virtual network of exercise buddies can be enough to flex your fitness mojo. In a study at the University of Pennsylvania, people placed in social media networks with fellow exercisers (even anonymously) actually increased their motivation as time went by.

'When it comes to healthy competition, it's so effective because we naturally compare ourselves to people like us and use them to evaluate whether we are

doing better or worse than we should be,' explains the university's Professor Damon Centola. 'If we see like-minded others getting back into shape faster, going to more fitness classes and losing weight more quickly – it gives us a new goal on which to model ourselves.'

SHARE YOUR GOALS

Prefer working out alone? Then at least discuss your fitness goals with others. Research shows we are more likely to follow through with pledges if we make them in front of friends. Meet up regularly to discuss and record your progress. 'Recording self-improvements in a social setting is really important,' says exercise psychologist Anthony Papathomas. 'Look at what you have achieved together, be it weight loss, or improvements in muscle tone, distance, strength or frequency – things that are in your control as well as those that aren't. Do it together and write it down to acknowledge where you've come from and what you achieved.'



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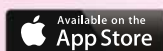


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MOTIVATING MINDSET:

I'll look and feel fabulous

Need a kick-start to get moving on a low mood day? Simply summoning up a positive exercise memory can help. People who recalled a positive exercise memory reported significantly higher levels of subsequent exercise than those who didn't, according to research from the University of New Hampshire in the US.

While we're on that subject, sports scientists have confirmed you're much more likely to stick with fitness in the long run if you look good – a perfect reason to invest in new kit that makes you love what you see in the mirror (see our kit round-up on p65). 'But ultimately, a good body image emanates from positive thoughts and emotions,' says Dr Rhonda Cohen, sport and exercise psychologist at Middlesex University. 'You can use positive

affirmations and visualisations to help. One of my favourites is to record a message to yourself. This can be a letter, note or audio message, with a reminder such as "you are beautiful", or "you can only do your best".'

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

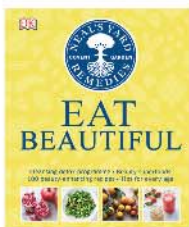
If being inside an exercise class or gym makes you self-conscious, take your workout outside. Evidence shows that being in nature has a profound impact on your brain, reducing anxiety and stress, boosting concentration and creativity and even upping your ability to connect with other people. And it's right now that you'll get the biggest boost. Research published in the journal *Psychological Science* has shown mood lifts significantly if you spend more than 30 minutes a day outside as the season shifts from winter to spring. Connect with these immediate benefits of a single exercise session rather than waiting until the long-term physical changes appear, and you'll feel that you're making good progress. You're literally only one workout away from an uplifted mood! 📌

Your mood noticeably improves when you exercise outside for 30 minutes a day

BEAUTY

Turn to nature this month for a rosy glow, beautiful fragrances and skincare superfoods.

EAT YOUR WAY TO BEAUTY



Most of us know that the foods we eat can influence our appearance, and Neal's Yard Remedies Eat Beautiful (£16.99,

DK) contains all the info you need to feast your way to good looks. Whether you want to calm sensitive skin, strengthen nails or bring life back to your hair, this book shows you how foods can play a vital role. As well as giving you the know-how on the top ingredients with beauty-bestowing powers, it contains 100 recipes including Berry Nice Skin, which supports the micro-circulation to the delicate skin around your eyes, helping lift dark shadows and add sparkle to your peepers.

Discover recipes with beauty-bestowing powers



3

OF THE
BEST...

*new
natural
scents*

Smell sweet
with spring's
garden-
inspired
perfumes...

Inspired by childhood dandelions, the new **Shay & Blue Dandelion Fig Natural Spray Fragrance** (£30/30ml, shayandblue.com) is a unisex scent that combines an initial hit of fresh green and dandelion with tomato vine and juniper and then a lingering earthy fig.



Terre de Lumiere Eau de Parfum (£78, loccitane.com) opens with uplifting bergamot, has lavender honey at its heart and a delicious base of acacia flower, almond, tonka bean and white musk to give a sensual scent. Layer with the Gentle Shower Gel, £15, and Beautifying Body Lotion, £21.



You might already love Neom Organics for its therapeutic candles and diffusers but now it has launched its first fragrance, **Energy Burst Eau de Parfum** (£49, neomorganics.com). This 100 per cent natural scent gives a zesty burst of grapefruit and lemon, both known to uplift.



NEW
NATURAL
BRAND

THE KINN RANGE

Tested by Natalie Millman.

We're always excited when a new beauty brand comes along, but no more so than when it's natural and affordable. KINN has been devised by a mother and daughter duo, and its products are based on recipes that have been handed down through generations of their family, which explains the name. The range includes bath salts, body wash, body oil, body lotion, bath oil and body scrub, with products priced from £14 (kinn-blog.com). The bath oil smells delicious and contains skin-nourishing jojoba oil, sweet almond oil and coconut oil, but skin doesn't feel greasy after a bath, just pampered!



HERO OF THE MONTH

Clean Beauty Co Rosy Glow (£35, cleanbeautyco.com).

Get radiant skin the natural way...

Clean Beauty Co products are handmade in London and contain natural ingredients from plants, nuts, flowers and seeds.

Camellia seed, jojoba seed, rosehip and sea buckthorn oils and vitamin E make it a rich source of essential fatty acids and antioxidants.

A serum with an oily consistency – use it after cleansing for a skin-nourishing treat.

Has a soft floral scent thanks to the rose otto flower oil.



Spring BEAUTY BLITZ

Wake up to new make-up with the latest colours and light formulas to freshen up your look.

Create a super base

The key to making your face look like the best version of itself is a less-is-more approach, adding fine layers of products that harness the powers of antioxidant vitamin complexes. Getting into good foundation habits in spring will see you looking fresher all year round. Start with Lottie London Insta Filter Pore Eraser Stick (£6.95, superdrug.com) to even out skin tone. You can work it on with your fingertips. Let it settle before moving on to Laura Mercier Tinted Moisturizer SPF 20 (£34, selfridges.com). Use a stiff brush to apply the colour, which is suitable for all skin types thanks to its antioxidant properties, then use a fluffier brush to really blur it in. This means you need less product and get a more natural, long-lasting result. Next, pat in Amazing Cosmetics Amazing Concealer (£29.50, amazingcosmetics.co.uk), where needed. It's mineral-based so really infuses skin with goodness, as well as dealing with pesky blemishes.



Define your eyes

As the days start getting longer we get to enjoy a hazy light, which complements natural finishes and colours beautifully. And there are a host of products adding cupuacu butter – a plant brimming with antioxidants – and jojoba oil to naturally enhance their effectiveness with moisturising properties. **Urban Decay Naked Ultimate Basics Eyeshadow Palette** (£38.50, urbandecay.co.uk) contains 12 shades including taupes, mushrooms and earthy browns. Concentrate lighter colours on outer and inner eye corners, focusing the darker colours on your lid, then blending out softly to open up your eyes.

Swap black liners for brown. **Lush Liquid Eyeliner in Quietly Motivated** (£14.50, uk.lush.com) will really wake up your face. Made with candelilla wax, it is easy to buff along lash lines using a cotton bud – remember to connect the two lines at the outer corners.

Add lashings of organic **Pur Triple Threat Mascara** (£16, beautybay.com). Its small wand grabs on to shorter, finer lashes. It generously coats them with shea butter-enhanced mascara.

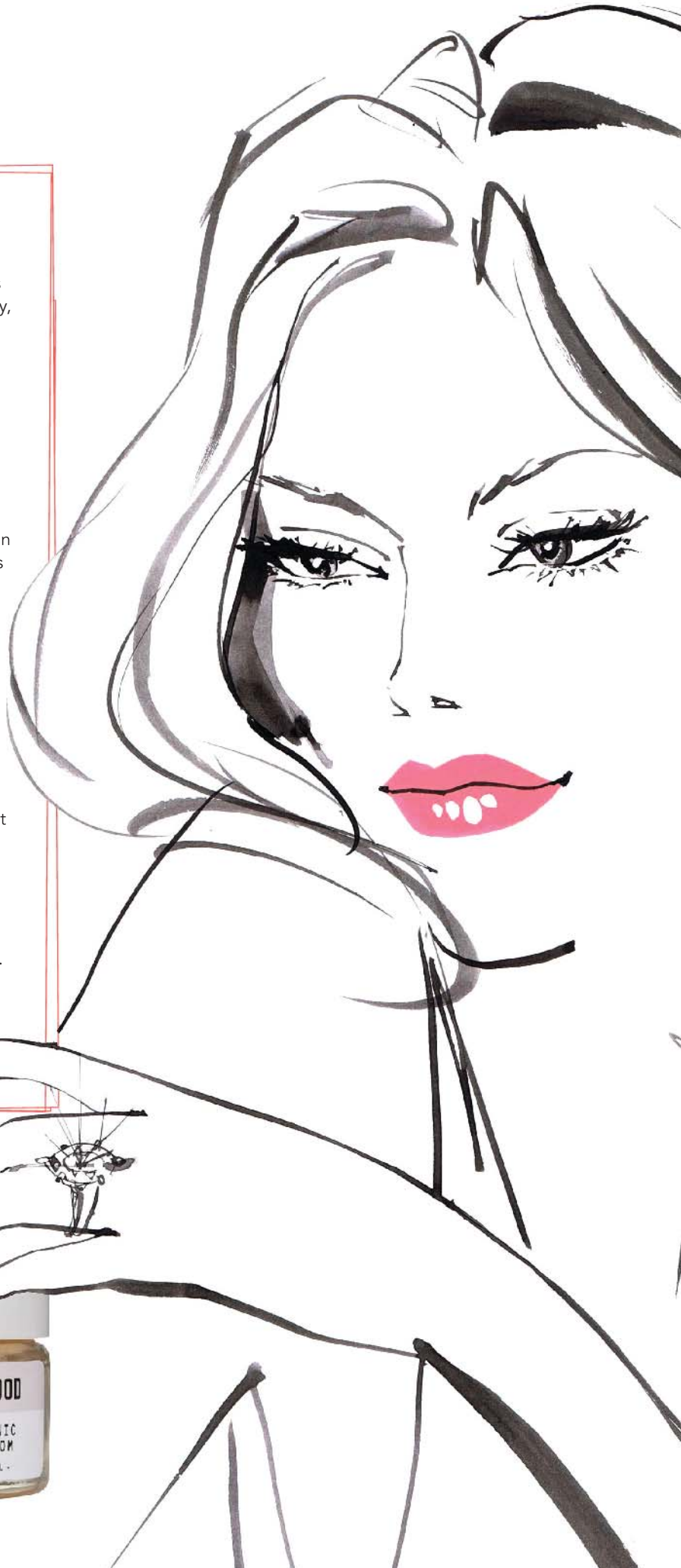


Get Lovely Lips

For the first time in decades, nude lipsticks are outselling traditional reds. Why? Peachy, pink and berry-based colours – chosen depending on your skin tone – make you look beautifully fresh. Trying out one of these shades for spring will ensure your overall look is polished while a nude lip is also low maintenance to wear.

Formulas are now being infused with natural oils such as rose and avocado to hydrate your pout. Shade selection is also growing. BareMinerals launched its paraben and sulphate-free Gen Nude collection this January with an impressive 40 hues, which means everyone can find the perfect match. **Bare Minerals Gen Nude Radiant Lipstick** (£18, bareminerals.co.uk) is buttery in texture and the finish is sheer, which is very flattering.

To make lipstick look its best, first prep lips with **Sister & Co. Raw Coconut Lip Tonic With Rose Otto & Cardamom** (£8.95, sisterandcompany.com). Apply five minutes before, so that the natural ingredients can sink in and soothe lips to avoid any flaking. Next, outline lips with **Smashbox Always Sharp Lip Liner in Sienna** (£16, smashbox.co.uk) before working this soft pencil all the way over them too. This gives your new nude lipstick something to hold on to so it won't budge as you layer it over the top.



Add colour to your cheeks

Blushers are one of the simplest ways to warm up your face. Peaches and corals are universally flattering and return a flush of youth. Choose ones that contain Vitamin E and fruit for added skincare benefits. To give your blush some super staying power, start with a creamy formula that melts into your skin. **Liz Earle Healthy Glow Cream Blush in Coral** (above left) (£16.50, uk.lizearle.com) ticks the vitamin E box and is easy to build up to the intensity you like – use the soft part at the base of your thumb to press it into place.

On top, gently brush on **Too Faced Papa Don't Peach Peach-Infused Blush** (£25, selfridges.com). It's full of peachy goodness and sets the colour underneath.

Offset your blush with **Laura Geller Easy Illuminating Stick in Gilded Honey** (£21, debenhams.com), which uses lychee extract to feed the face, while bouncing light off your complexion for a flattering look.



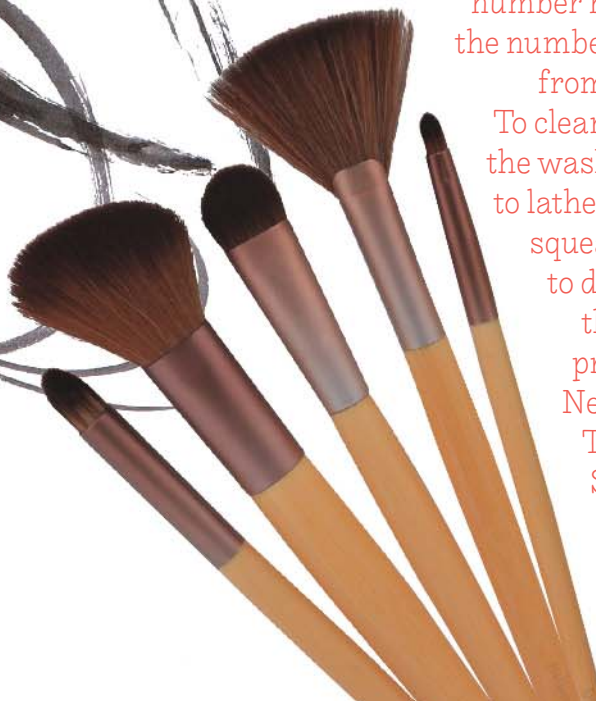
SPRING CLEAN YOUR BEAUTY KIT

Just like your house, your make-up bag benefits from a good going over.

Ditch any broken or out-of-date products – check the back of them for the little pot symbol with a number next to it as this indicates the number of months you can use it from the date of opening.

To clean your brushes, reach for the washing up liquid or shampoo to lather up the hairs until they're squeaky clean, before leaving to dry. You should ideally do this every few weeks to prevent bacteria build-up.

Need new ones? Try the **Eco Tools Day To Night Brush Set** (£15.18, ecotools.com), which are vegan friendly and oh so soft. 🌱



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Spotlight on CAFFEINE

Perk up your beauty regime with some coffee-inspired treatments.

Caffeine has long been regarded as the ultimate pick-me-up, and now it's stimulating a lot of interest in the skincare world! Most often touted for its energising properties, caffeine offers other benefits too. 'Products with caffeine in them are used as antioxidants and

anti-inflammatories,' explains dermatologist Dr Harold Lancer. 'It's used to stimulate blood flow to the skin and has the power to reduce wrinkles too.'

So whether or not you're a fan of an espresso or a latte, you might like to try a caffeine boost for your face.

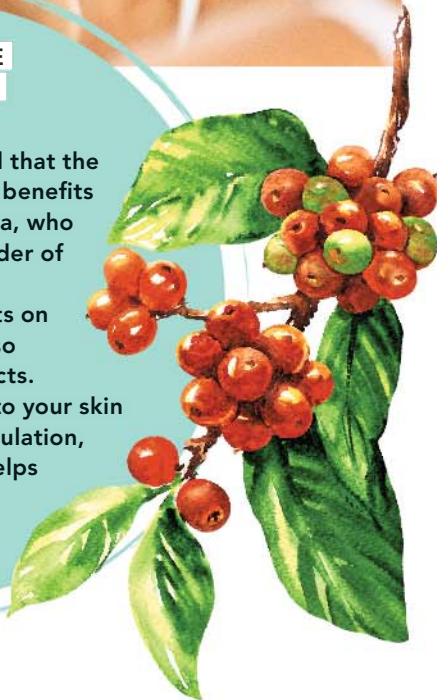


THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE CLAIMS

'Researchers have found that the topical use of caffeine has benefits to the skin' says Shabir Daya, who is a pharmacist and co-founder of victoriahealth.com.

While it can have good results on 'orange peel' skin, it is also effective in facial products.

'When you apply caffeine to your skin it enhances localised circulation, which, on your face, helps remove puffiness around your eyes.'



3 OF THE BEST

Tropic Super Greens Nutrient Boost Serum (£42, tropicskincare.com) contains caffeine-rich green coffee extract to stimulate cell renewal.



Origins GinZing Energy-Boosting Treatment Lotion Mist (£18, origins.co.uk) gently refreshes the face and fights the appearance of fatigue.

Aveda Botanical Kinetics Energizing Eye Creme (£28, aveda.co.uk) reduces puffiness and brightens the under-eye area.



I TRIED IT...

Debbie Smith, 50, from Suffolk, tried **Nuxe Contour Des Yeux Prodigueux Anti-Fatigue Eye Cream** (£17, nuxe.com).

This anti-ageing eye cream includes caffeine to smooth the eye contour and reduce the appearance of dark circles. 'I applied this twice a day after cleansing. It was really light and left a cooling sensation, which helped to awaken my skin in the mornings. I've been using this cream for over two weeks now and I believe my dark circles have improved. My under eye area feels softer and looks brighter, plus I haven't had to apply as much concealer as usual. I was also impressed with how far a little of the product goes.'





REVEAL YOUR *radiance*

Emerge from winter's cocoon a brilliant butterfly with these exfoliating and deeply cleansing scrubs – perfect for a beautifying April shower.

WITH NEW SHOOTS bursting forth from the earth, so too can you emerge radiant and resplendent for spring with a little

help from some of the best body scrubs around. 'The outermost layer of your skin, the stratum corneum, is comprised of dead, keratin-rich cells that form a protective barrier against external aggressors and protect the living cells beneath,' explains Ian Taylor, cosmetic scientist for Green People.

These cells are continually being shed and need to be replaced – a process that starts in the deeper skin layers where cell division occurs. Newly created cells gradually migrate to the surface, becoming more keratinised – meaning they become filled with keratin, a tough fibrous protein. Once they reach the surface they are mostly composed of this keratin, which is when they start to flake.

In our 20s and 30s, the process to completely renew our skin takes 3-5 weeks, but as we get older it slows down and, in our 50s and 60s, can take as long as 12 weeks. However, the great news is exfoliation can increase blood circulation and speed up the process to reveal beautifully soft skin.

HERE'S THE RUB

Most body scrubs include a physical exfoliant – an abrasive ingredient that sloughs away dead cells from the skin's surface – and nature provides a wide array. 'The likes of sugar, salt, grains, nut shells and fruit peel all make great natural exfoliation choices,' says Fiona Brackenbury, skincare specialist at Decléor.

The one you choose can depend on your skin type and what you're hoping to achieve. 'A sugar scrub is the most natural way to soften your skin. Its fine texture gently

exfoliates without leaving harmful residue that can clog pores,' she says.

If you want an energising scrub to use in the shower, **Decléor 1000**

Sugar,
salt and
grains will
naturally
exfoliate
and soften
your skin.

Make your own scrub

Raid your kitchen cupboard to concoct this DIY exfoliator, from skincare expert Fiona Brackenbury.

WHAT YOU NEED Whip up a body scrub at home using sugar or salt, or both. Sugars vary in particle size, so choose according to your skin's needs and sensitivity e.g. demerara has coarse crystals so is best suited to a foot scrub. Add a base oil such as olive and then feel free to tailor your scrub by adding essential oils such as almond or rosemary. For example, mix 1 tsp sugar with 2 tsp olive oil and ½ tsp lemon juice and use to smooth your skin all over.

HOW IT WORKS The sugar will buff away dead skin cells while the olive oil is rich in hydrating omegas. The lemon juice contains citric acid, an alpha hydroxy acid that can remove dead skin cells.

Grain Body Exfoliator (1) (£28, decléor.co.uk) uses argan shell, orange peel and pearl sugar as the physical scrub element plus grapefruit essential oil to invigorate. It comes in a gel formula that turns to oil once you start massaging, then transforms again into a milk once you start washing with water.

Natural salts such as Himalayan and Dead Sea are also commonly used as a physical scrub. These are rich in the minerals magnesium, calcium and potassium, and can assist in detoxing, reducing inflammation and improving hydration.

Green People Sugar Scrub (2) (£21, greenpeople.co.uk) uses organic pure cane sugar crystals to gently exfoliate and deeply cleanse, while shea butter and rosehip, pomegranate and coconut oils soften, and calendula soothes.

Ila Spa Body Scrub For Energising And Detoxifying (3) (£47, ila-spa.com) uses Himalayan salt crystals to detox, as well as leave skin feeling soft, while geranium, lemongrass and juniper berry stimulate your circulation and leave you feeling uplifted. It's best rubbed into damp skin before soaking in a bath for 20 minutes, or use pre-shower to wake you up in the morning.



ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Non-physical types of exfoliant don't contain abrasive particles but, instead, active ingredients such as fruit acids to dissolve the bonds that hold dead cells to the skin's surface. Some examples include alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) such as glycolic acid from sugar cane, lactic acid from milk and citric acid from citrus fruits. 'AHAs are fantastic to even skin tone, help to fade dark patches, promote cell turnover, hydrate and provide an overall healthy look,' says Fiona.

Ameliorate Skin Smoothing Body Polish (4) (£19.50, ameliorate-skincare.com) contains lactic acid to dissolve dead cells, encourage cell turnover and retain moisture within your skin. This was specially formulated to tackle keratosis pilaris, the little red pimples that often occur on upper arms.

Another acid option is beta hydroxy acid (BHA or salicylic acid), which comes from the bark of willow trees. As it can penetrate deeper into your pores than a physical scrub, BHA is a good choice for congested skin.

Paula's Choice Resist Weightless 2% BHA Body Treatment (5) (£30, paulaschoice.com) contains BHA to shed dead skin and unclog pores. It's a leave-on exfoliant that softens the hard bumps on your arms and legs. Be sure to use sunscreen during the day when you're using this, as BHA makes skin more susceptible to UV radiation.

If you have sensitive skin, fruit enzymes are a great choice. 'Bromelain from pineapple and papain from papaya have proteolytic actions, meaning they dissolve protein bonding structures, releasing dead cells and allowing them to be wiped or washed away,' explains Ian.

Elemental Herbology Macadamia & Papaya Radiance Body Scrub (6) (£30, elementalherbology.com) uses papaya to help break down dead skin cells and

strawberry to purify. It's best left on for two minutes before showering to allow the fruit enzymes to get to work.

Getting the most out of your scrub

With a bit of application know-how there are plenty of ways to uncover glowing skin this spring.

1

Unless otherwise directed, apply your scrub to dry skin, or slightly damp skin if yours is sensitive or your scrub is quite firm in consistency. Start at your feet and work your way up your legs and body. Pay particular attention to elbows and knees where skin can feel rough, plus areas of poor circulation such as tops of thighs and upper arms.

2

Massage the scrub into your skin using small circular movements. Always work towards your heart so that you're following the same direction as your lymphatic system. This encourages the flow of lymph fluid to help eliminate waste and toxins.



3 Leave the scrub on for a few minutes before showering so the oils can be absorbed. Rinse off. Pat your skin with a towel then apply your usual moisturiser so your skin remains hydrated.

4 Exfoliating with a scrub is best done once or twice a week, but in-between you can help boost circulation and encourage cell renewal with dry body brushing. Use a brush with natural bristles such as the **Liz Earle Natural Bristle Body Brush** (£8.50, lizearle.com). Its long handle makes it ideal for reaching areas such as your back, but it's detachable to give you more control when brushing areas such as your stomach.

5 Short on time? **The Korean Spa Magic Peeling Mitt** (£4.50, thisisbeautymart.com) is a speedy option. One side of the mitt is towelling, which you can use to apply your shower gel. The other side is rayon, a natural wood derivative, which is great for sloughing away all your old, dead skin. 🧼



TRY A ZING AND TONIC
Give skin a drink of **Odylique Balancing Citrus Super Tonic** (£15, odylique.co.uk). The fine mist contains concentrated rose petal floral water plus sebum-balancing citrus oil, making it perfect for oily or combination skin types. Use it to cleanse, tone and close pores.

STAY SHINE FREE With uplifting essential oils of bergamot, lemon and mandarin, **BRYT Day Moisturiser** (£18.50, brytskincare.co.uk) is light in formulation with SPF15 protection. It mattifies and absorbs excess sebum without clogging your pores for a smooth and shine-free complexion.

SPRING CLEAN YOUR SKIN

Refresh your complexion morning and night with **Burt's Bees Orange Essence Facial Cleanser** (£11.49, burtsbees.co.uk). The citrusy orange oil and soap bark removes impurities such as dirt, oil and make-up.

BEAUTY TOOLKIT ENERGISING HYDRATORS

Complexion in need of a drink? Quench its thirst with these zingy citrus-infused hydrators for super-smooth skin.

CREATE SOME CLARITY

Cool down irritated skin with **Kocostar Lemon Slice Mask Sheet** (£4, asos.com). Each pack contains 12 mini lemon slice sheet masks that you can apply where needed to calm and clarify your skin tone. Keep them in the fridge for an extra burst of freshness.

SPEED UP CELL TURNOVER

A refreshing mixture of orange, mandarin and grapefruit peel oils give **Murad Intensive-C Radiance Peel** (£49.50, murad.co.uk) some zing. The peel combines glycolic acid with vitamin C to help accelerate cell turnover, remove dullness and even out skin tone.



QUENCH DRY LIPS

Don't leave your mouth out of the citrus party. Add moisture with **Dr Organic Olive Oil Lip Balm** (£3.49, hollandandbarrett.com), which combines nourishing organic virgin olive oil and shea butter with zingy lemon oil to refresh and smooth. The SPF 15 also protects lips from the spring sunshine.



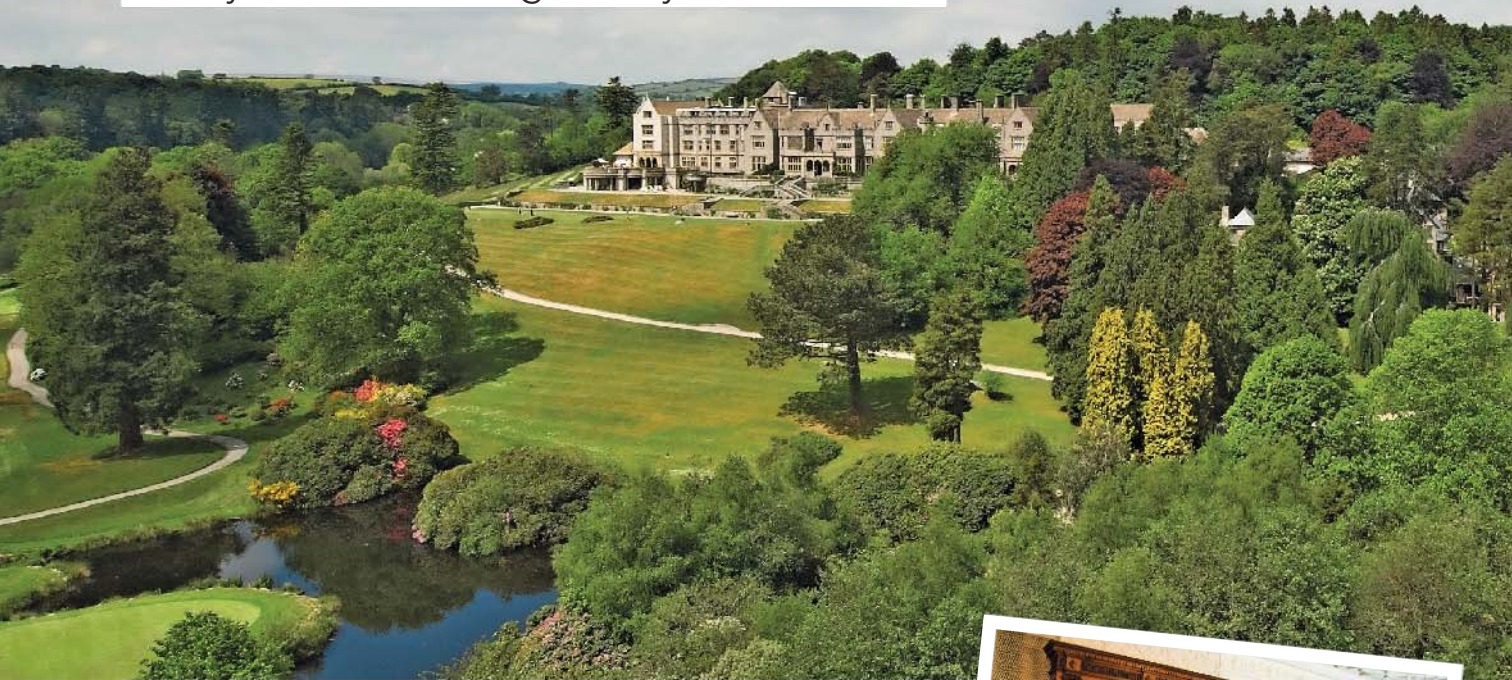
PLUMP UP WITH VITAMIN C

Oil- and paraben-free, **Mabel + Meg Lumilixir Serum** (£29, cultbeauty.co.uk) delivers vitamin C to help increase plumpness and perfection, so you look fresher faced. It also contains ascorbic acid, found naturally in citrus fruits.



Free for YOU!

Treat yourself with our giveaways worth £1,950.

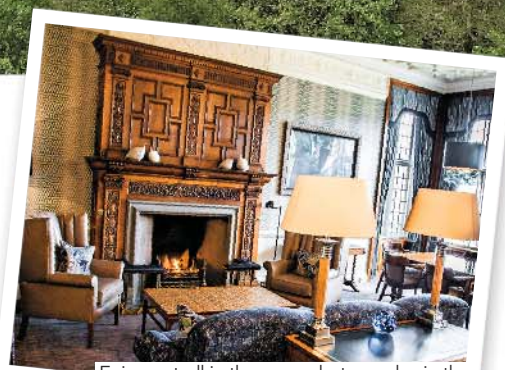


WIN A TWO-NIGHT COUNTRY HOUSE BREAK WORTH £822

Be pampered during a luxurious two-night stay at Bovey Castle in Dartmoor National Park in Devon. During your visit, you and a friend can enjoy the Elan Spa complete with star-lit swimming pool, sauna and steam room. You'll be able to choose from one of three treatments: a relaxing back, neck and shoulder massage; a salt and oil scrub, which combines sea salts with essential oils to leave your skin nourished, smooth and supple, or an invigorating foot treatment, which uses exfoliation and massage.

You can also give countryside pursuits such as falconry, archery and mountain biking a try or, if you prefer, simply go for a relaxing stroll around the 275-acre grounds.

Your prize includes an evening meal in the exclusive Great Western Restaurant and on both mornings of your stay you can wake up to a delicious full English breakfast. The prize, courtesy of Pride of Britain Hotels, is subject to availability and must be taken and booked within six months. Find out more at prideofbritainhotels.co.uk.



Enjoy a stroll in the grounds, top, relax in the lounge, middle, and sample the delights of the Great Western restaurant, below.



READER
OFFER

Enjoy a spa break at Bovey Castle. Offer includes a 55-minute ESPA treatment per person at Elan Spa, accommodation for two nights and full English breakfast. Prices start from £249 per night, per room based on a couple staying in a Classic Room (a saving of £50). To book, please call reservations on 01647 445007 and quote 'Top Sante Magazine.' Terms and conditions apply.

2 x KEEN Terradora Mid Shoes



Worth
£220

Made with a breathable mesh lining to keep your feet fresh and dry with an all-terrain rubber outsole for high-traction grip, the Terradora (£110, keenfootwear.com) is the ideal shoe whether you're exploring city streets or walking in the countryside. A lower collar height encourages freedom of movement, while a cushioned panel reduces pressure on the Achilles.

100 x 3 boxes of Qi Tea

Refresh yourself with Qi's ethical green teas (from £1.15/box, qi-teas.com). They are packed at the tea gardens straight after picking to retain all the natural goodness of the fresh leaf so that their teas are delicate and mellow and made with the finest quality ingredients. Varieties include Organic Detox Green Tea and Green Tea Plus.



Worth
£447



Worth
£231

1 x Spectrum Noir Colorista bundle

Colouring has been found to help ignite creativity with studies finding people who do it are more creative in their jobs and analytical thinking activities. So this month why not win yourself the full collection of colouring products from Spectrum Noir Colorista (spectrumnoir.com).

5 x That Protein bundles

Give your bone health and energy a boost with That Protein powders (from £12.99, thatprotein.com), which blend organic plant proteins and superfoods such as hemp, baobab and chia seeds. Add them to smoothies, baking or to fortify any of your favourite recipes.



Worth
£250

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ASK THE EXPERTS

If you have a health, fitness or beauty question for our experts, email talkback@topsante.co.uk or tweet us @TopSanteUK

BEAUTY EXPERT

Karen Sinclair Drake is a beauty expert. Visit cosmetic researchlab.com.



Q How can I reduce the dark circles under my eyes? I have dry skin so concealer often looks flaky. *Megan, 38*

A Dark circles are usually produced by lack of sleep, poor circulation or stressed adrenal glands. As a starting point, sleeping with your head raised on a pillow will help to prevent and can even eliminate blood flow congestion.

Herbs such as ashwagandha and ginseng – the most potent one is panax ginseng (Korean) – can help address the stress, but it's important to consult your GP for guidance.

Also try applying chilled, not frozen, black tea bags and cucumber or potato discs on cleansed eyelids for 15 minutes until they start to feel warm. They help improve circulation, reduce swelling (puffiness), brighten the complexion and soothe the skin.

To avoid concealer looking flaky, make sure the area is well moisturised. Kale Biomimetic Anti-Ageing Eye Cream (£30, nourishskinrange.com) is rich in natural vitamin K, which is known for dramatically improving dark under-eye circles.



Chilled cucumber slices placed on your eyes can help to reduce dark circles.



A mix of cinnamon and coconut oil helps to exfoliate and plump lips.

Q My lips are really thin – what are the best natural ways to plump them? I've tried plumping glosses but the effect is minimal.
Sylvia, 45

A A natural, affordable DIY solution for plumping lips, which is used by professional make-up artists because it works so well, is to blend one teaspoon of cinnamon powder with enough coconut oil to create a creamy mixture. Using your toothbrush or fingertips, use the mixture to gently exfoliate clean lips for approximately 30 seconds. Let the mixture work for approximately one minute. If you experience any irritation, rinse

immediately. Finish by removing any excess mixture with a damp cloth followed by a liberal layer of organic lip balm. Start by doing this once a week, working up to a maximum of three times per week.

Last but not least, you can also achieve a fuller-lip effect with make-up. Use a lip liner slightly above your natural lip line then fill the space with a creamy lipstick that has a pinkish hue. Finish with a layer of clear gloss.

Q I've got thread veins on my cheeks – is there any way to reduce their appearance or natural ways to get rid of them? *Tina, 50*

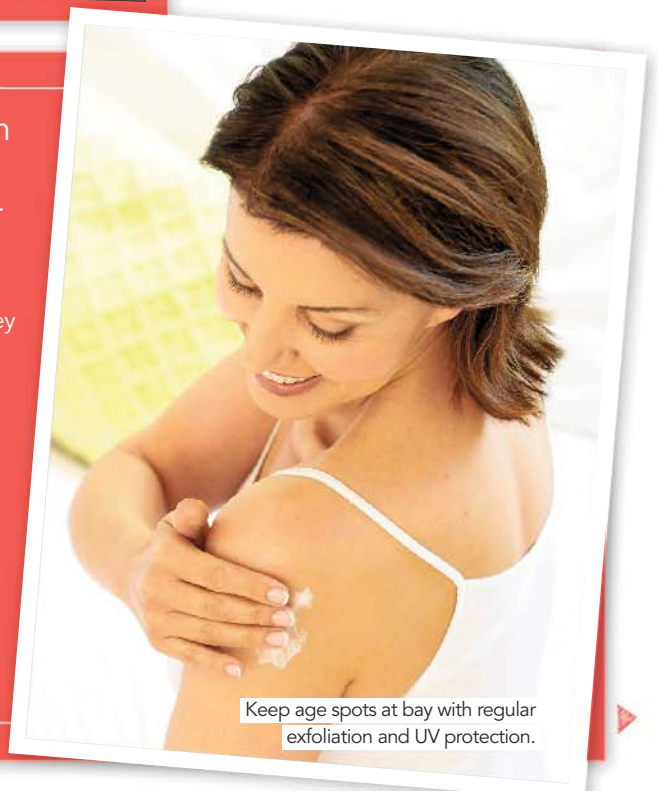
A You can have thread veins cauterised with Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) therapy, which is a treatment that emits light that's readily absorbed by blood vessels. It heats them to the point where they are destroyed and reabsorbed by the body, leaving little or no trace of the original lesion. Depending how many you have, it can take as little as 10 minutes and for a single vein can cost from £50-£80 for one session to £140-£190 for a course of three.

Alternatively, Bobby Brown Creamy Concealer (£19.50, bobbibrown.co.uk) provides maximum coverage for up to eight hours without streaking, creasing or changing colour. It's popular with professional make-up artists because it packs a serious pigment punch, offers 15 shades and is water-, sweat- and humidity-resistant. It also goes on easily and blends with minimal effort.

Q I've developed some brown spots on my arms and shoulders – are there any creams that will help to reduce their appearance? *Pam, 48*

A Besides the obvious external cause of age spots, they are also a sign of internal oxidation. You can help reduce them, and even see them disappear in time, by taking regular vitamin supplements including vitamin C, lycopene, resveratrol, pycnogenol and/or glutathione – any of them will help.

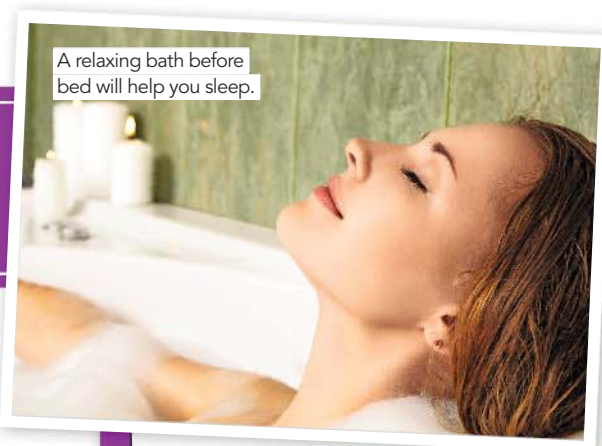
Daily exfoliation with the French Red Clay Konjac 6 Wave Bath Sponge (£11.99, konjac sponge company.com) will help to minimise their appearance. Follow with Green People Age Defy+ 24 Hour Brightening Moisturiser (£36, greenpeople.co.uk) and finish off with SophytoPRO mineral-based SPF 30+ sunscreen (£43, sophyto pro.com) to protect skin from further UV damage.



Keep age spots at bay with regular exfoliation and UV protection.



SLEEP EXPERT
Maryanne Taylor is a sleep consultant. Visit thesleepworks.co.uk.



A relaxing bath before bed will help you sleep.

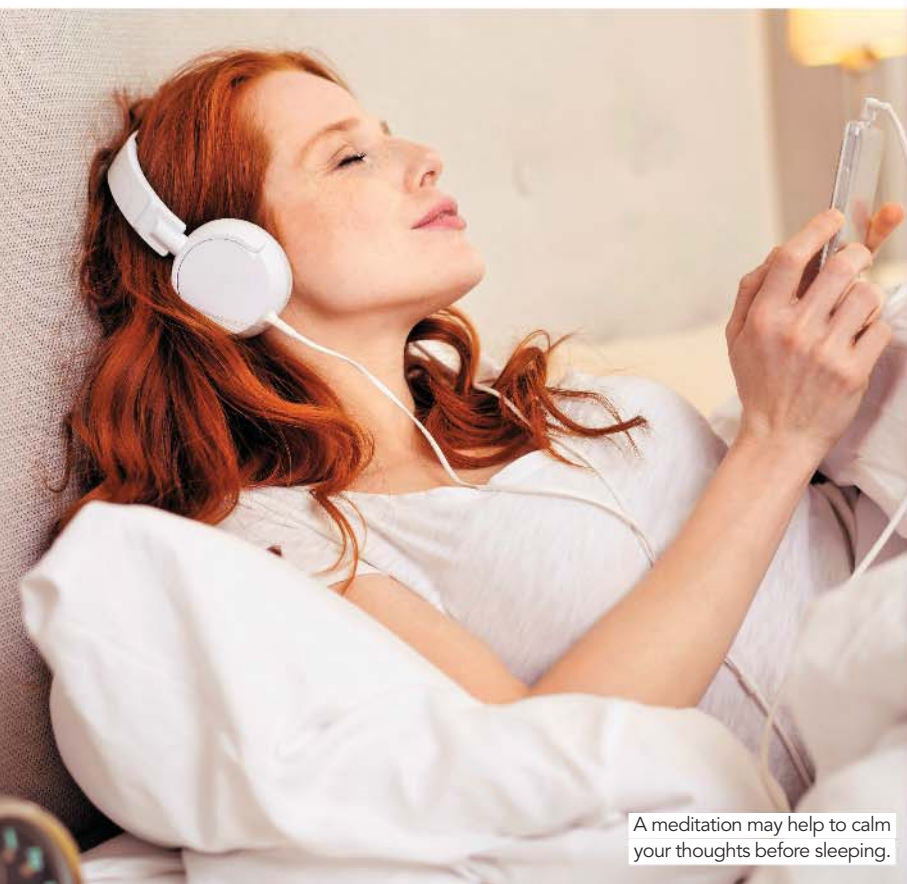
Q My dreams have been really vivid of late and have left me feeling upset each morning. Are there any ways to calm my mind before bedtime? Or what else might be causing this? *Sam, 41*

A First of all, rest assured that you're not alone with this. Most of us dream every night, and sometimes we recall these dreams when we wake and sometimes not. You may be remembering the details of your dreams if your sleeping patterns have changed recently – staying up later than normal or waking up earlier. As most of our dreams occur in the REM (rapid eye movement) stage of sleep, you may be waking up before

completing your full sleep cycle, which is allowing you to recall the details of your dreams.

Keeping a dream diary may help you to process your thoughts about these dreams and often, writing them down can actively 'remove' them from your thoughts.

Try using white noise in your room as soon as you get into bed and keep it on throughout the night. Listening to a short meditation app may also be helpful in calming your thoughts.



A meditation may help to calm your thoughts before sleeping.

Q I've recently moved back to the UK from Australia and I'm struggling to settle into a regular sleeping pattern. Do you have any tips?

Carol, 42

A Moving across time zones can affect your body clock, causing sleep disturbance. I would firstly recommend you stick to a regular routine. So go to bed at a similar time every night and have a predictable and consistent lead-up to getting into bed. Stick to relaxing activities such as taking a bath, reading, listening to an audio book, having a warm drink and try to avoid any screens during this time. The blue light emitted from screens can interfere with the production of melatonin, which is the sleep hormone that significantly impacts on our ability to get to sleep.

Light is a factor in signalling to your body when it is time to be awake. Help adjust by getting up at the same time every morning and turning on bright lights, opening curtains or, even better, getting outside into natural light as soon as possible after waking up.

Finally, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after 2pm as they can stay in your system for up to eight hours.

NUTRITION EXPERT

Jackie Lynch is a nutritional therapist and author of *The Right Bite* (£6.99, Nourish Books).



Limiting your gluten intake can help relieve bloating if you have a sensitivity.



Q Should I really be avoiding gluten? Lots of people seem to but is it healthier? *Sally, 52*

A Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye and barley, which means it can be found in bread, bakery products, pasta, couscous and beer, for example. People with coeliac disease are intolerant to gluten and need to

exclude it completely from their diet so you should consult your GP if you think you need to be tested. Gluten may also cause bloating and discomfort in some sensitive individuals so limiting the amount you eat across the day may help to relieve these sorts of symptoms. However, there's no need to avoid it if you don't struggle with these issues. Gluten-free products often contain just as much sugar or fat as other products, so they're not automatically healthier.

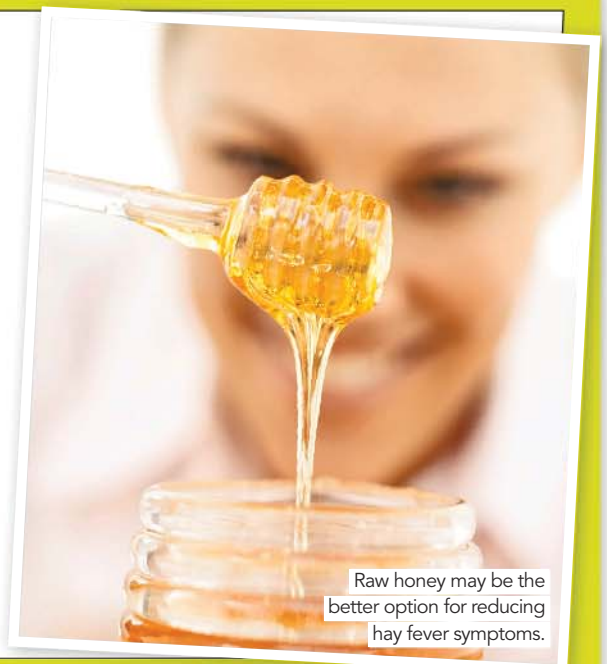
Q My dentist told me not to snack as it's bad for my teeth, but I feel shaky if I don't eat at least every 3-4 hours. What do you recommend?
Kathryn, 39

A The trick here is to avoid sugary snacks such as cakes, sweets and chocolate. Fruit juices and smoothies can be very acidic and also damage the enamel on your teeth. In general, keep your snacks on the savoury side – an easy option is houmous with carrot sticks or 1-2 oatcakes with some cottage cheese or unsweetened nut butter. Try a pot of edamame beans or 7-8 raw nuts with some cherry tomatoes. All of these would keep your blood sugar nicely balanced until the next meal.

Q Can I reduce hay fever symptoms by eating local honey? *Emma, 45*

A For centuries, honey has been used for a range of medicinal purposes due to the antimicrobial and antioxidant properties derived from the plant compounds it contains. There's no scientific evidence to support the theory that it can reduce hay fever symptoms although some people swear by it. The principle is based on the fact that exposure to pollen from local flowers may help to desensitise you. However, there are so many different types of pollen, including grass pollen, which makes it very difficult for one product to tick all the boxes. Of course, there's no harm in trying it, as you may be one of the lucky ones!

Do bear in mind that the therapeutic impact of the honey can be dramatically affected by the processing of honey, which is why raw, unpasteurised honey may be a better option, provided it conforms to safety standards.



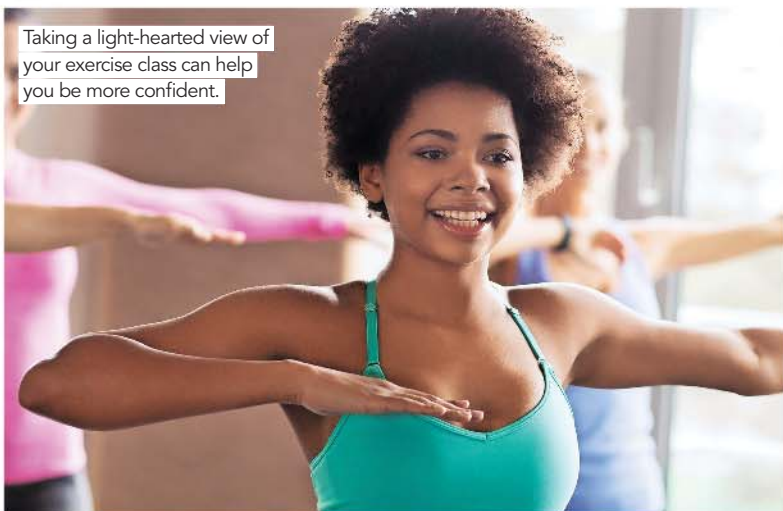
Raw honey may be the better option for reducing hay fever symptoms.



LIFE COACH EXPERT

Christine Livingston is a psychotherapist.
Visit christinelivingston.com.

Taking a light-hearted view of your exercise class can help you be more confident.



Q I'd like to join an exercise class but I'm very shy. How can I build up the confidence? *Jo, 35*

A Good for you for wanting to join a class! Your self-consciousness is quite normal. But here's the secret: even seasoned exercisers worry and are sometimes so busy worrying about themselves, they don't notice anything else or anyone else anyway.

Nevertheless, you can harness confidence by changing the way you choose to see your class. See it as scary and intimidating and that's how you'll experience it. Flip it in your mind to something that's a light-hearted experiment, and you can walk in feeling more able to be yourself and have fun.

Q Hubby and I want to quit our jobs and travel. How can we do this? *Marie, 58*

A Quitting your jobs to travel is a life-changing and potentially relationship-altering decision. No matter how good your personal organisation skills,

this is an adventure you need to plan together.

Finally, assuming you're both on board, beware of over-thinking. Put the wheels in motion by nailing down critical things such as money, visas and inoculations up front. Then get clear on the first steps you need to take. Once the logistics are in place and the wheels in motion, it's easy to follow through and go for it.



FITNESS EXPERT

Lisa-Jane Holmes is a personal trainer.
Visit wildcatfitnessuk.com.

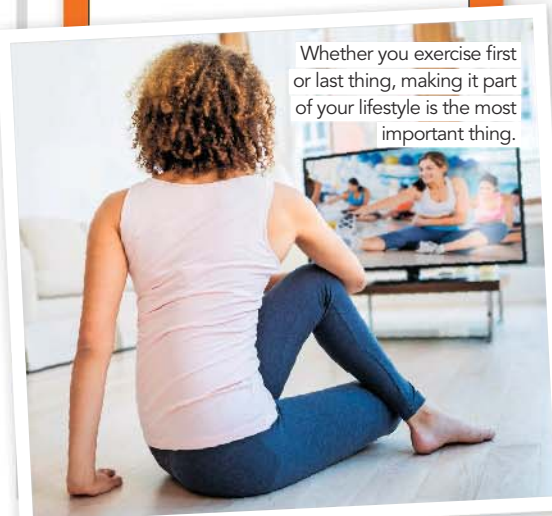
Q Each evening I do workout DVDs but is exercising in the morning more effective? *Becky, 40*

A Morning exercise has been shown to increase overall calorie burn throughout the day as well as mental clarity and focus. Plus, you are less likely to skip a workout if it is already done by the time you eat breakfast – as opposed to last thing in the day when it's easy to be too tired/hungry/distracted to exercise.

However, your joints and muscles are better prepared in the evening, so less prone to injury. Evening exercise can also be a great way to relieve stress from your day.

There are pros and cons to both, so the most effective time is really the one that is sustainable and realistic for you. As long as you're getting it done, that's what matters.

Whether you exercise first or last thing, making it part of your lifestyle is the most important thing.





Both yoga and Pilates can build strength and help you to tone up.

Q I want to tone up. Some of my friends recommend yoga while others suggest Pilates. What's the difference and which is best for toning?
Wendy, 50

A Both yoga and Pilates have a huge range of benefits and can help you strengthen your body, which will give you more of a 'toned' look. Yoga focuses on uniting the mind, body and spirit, and so as well as the physical benefits such as flexibility, it can also help with relaxation and stress relief. Pilates focuses more on core strength and has a different style of breathing to bring more oxygen into your body. It can also incorporate various pieces of equipment from rings and balls to a reformer machine.

There are also many different types of yoga – some more focused on the meditation aspect and some more focused on building strength and flexibility, so there will be a style to suit you.

Why not try both, as the best type of exercise is one you enjoy. Both yoga and Pilates can build strength, which in turn will help you to achieve the toned look you're after.

Q My job is sedentary – are there any discreet exercises I can do at my desk without disturbing my colleagues? *Sue, 55*

A If you find yourself seated for long periods of time, try to get up from your chair for at least five minutes every hour – this could be to make a cup of tea or walk to the bathroom. Try not to be seated for more than an hour at a time. But while you are at your desk, try to do at least one of these exercises every hour and repeat each five times.

● **HIP MARCHES:** Sit with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor, in line with your hips. Lift one knee straight up as far as is comfortable, pause for a couple of seconds and then repeat with the other leg. This will engage your hips and thighs.

● **GLUTE ACTIVATORS:** Sit up straight and, one side at a time,

aim to contract your glutes (bottom) muscles as hard as you can and hold for five seconds before gradually releasing and changing sides. Glutes are the main muscles that become inactive from being sedentary.

● **AB CONTRACTIONS:** Sit tall and draw your belly button in towards your spine as far as you can without simply sucking your stomach in. Hold for five seconds then gradually release.

● **ANKLE FLEXION:** Raise one leg off the floor. Once straight, point your toes away from you and hold for five seconds, then flex your foot towards you and hold for five seconds. Repeat this sequence five times before changing legs. 

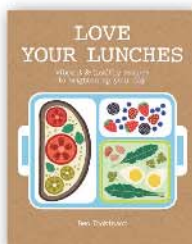
SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS ON:

● Beauty ● Fitness ● Nutrition ● Psychology ● Hormones

Email talkback@topsante.co.uk (tell us if you'd like to remain anonymous).

FOOD & DRINK

Eats, treats, recipes and gadgets for a tasty, wholesome April.



FANTASTIC FIBRE

Asparagus is abundant right now, which is great as it contains lots of soluble dietary fibre to help keep your digestion healthy. Try this Sun-Dried Tomato and Asparagus Puff Pastry Tart from new book

Love Your Lunches (£12.99, Hardie Grant) by Bec Dickinson, which makes the perfect midday dish.

SUN-DRIED TOMATO AND ASPARAGUS PUFF PASTRY TART

Preheat the oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with parchment. Place 375g of ready-rolled puff pastry onto the tray and score a 2cm border around the edge. Brush over 1 large egg beaten, then make fork indents on the inside of the border. Bake for 10 mins, until golden and puffed. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark, dry place. Line another baking tray and place 100g of asparagus onto the tray. Drizzle over 1 tbsp of olive oil, the zest of 1 lemon and season. Roast for 10 mins until tender. Allow to cool then store in an airtight container in the fridge. Portion out 200g mascarpone cheese and 200g of feta and store in the fridge until ready to use. To assemble, spread the mascarpone over the pastry and sprinkle over the feta. Arrange 100g of sun-dried tomatoes and the asparagus on top. Dollop on 2 tbsp of pesto and sprinkle over 4 tsp toasted pine nuts.



3

OF THE BEST... *energy bars*

These snack bars are great for giving you a burst of slow releasing energy to keep you going – they're tasty too!

Eat Natural Extra Protein (£1.99/3, morrisons.com) contains 70 per cent nuts and seeds including golden linseeds and nutty sunflower seeds, which are a great source of energy-producing magnesium.

Trek Cocoa Chaos (£1.45 each, hollandandbarrett.com) contains 100 per cent natural ingredients such as dates, raisins and cashews and counts as one of your five a day.

CLIF Bar Crunchy Peanut Butter (£1.79 each, hollandandbarrett.com) is packed with peanuts, for healthy fats and protein, fibre, and organic wholegrains for sustainable energy.

KITCHEN STAR OF THE MONTH

Spiro

(£16, josephjoseph.com). Create healthy and exciting dishes with the new hand-held spiraliser from Joseph Joseph. With all the features and efficacy of larger models, Spiro creates curly ribbons from a variety of vegetables and fruits to help liven up your meals.

The base container collects food as you cut, avoiding a messy worktop.

Small enough to fit in your kitchen drawer without taking up cupboard space.

Three blade options including coarse and fine for different types of veg and a grating blade for cheese or carrots.



GET UP AND GO!

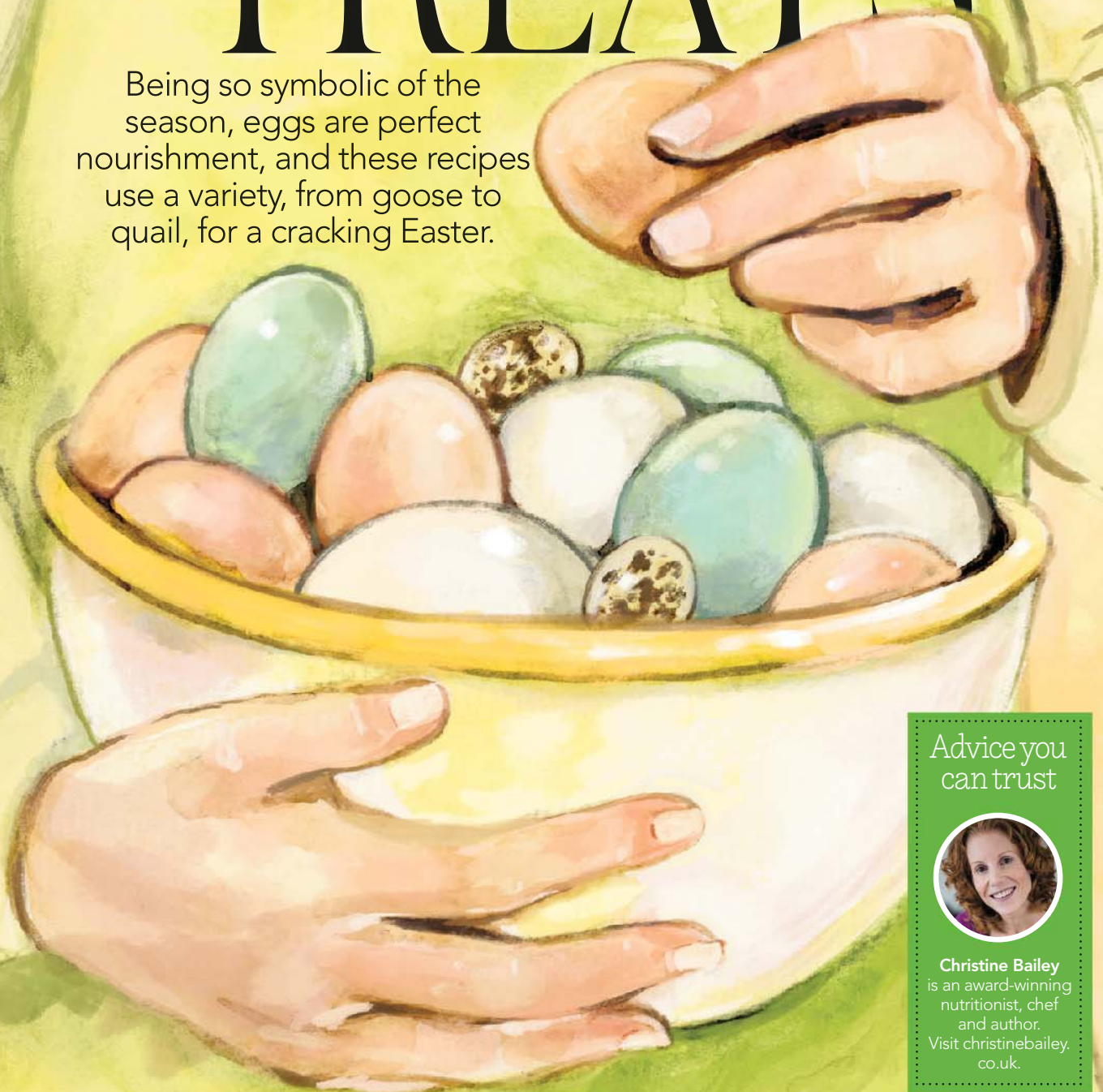
If you find yourself running out of time for breakfast in the morning, grab a carton of Up&Go (£1.79, upandgo.co.uk). This delicious oatly breakfast drink is made of soy protein, fibre and calcium to get you raring to go for the day ahead. It comes in milk chocolate, vanilla and banana and honey flavours.



FOOD TO SUIT YOU

EASTER TREATS

Being so symbolic of the season, eggs are perfect nourishment, and these recipes use a variety, from goose to quail, for a cracking Easter.



Advice you
can trust



Christine Bailey
is an award-winning
nutritionist, chef
and author.
Visit christinebailey.co.uk.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for an alternative to chicken eggs to scramble, poach or bake, Easter is the perfect time to try something new. A number of less commonplace varieties are now finding their way onto our supermarket shelves, such as duck, goose and quail. Not only can they add something a bit different to your dishes, they often give a richer flavour and are just as nutritious as those from good ol' chickens.

Eggs are one of the most nutrient-dense foods around. One chicken egg provides 13 essential nutrients, all packed into the yolk, which is far more nutritious than the white. They're an excellent source of B vitamins, which are important for energy production, and vitamin A to keep your immune system and eyes healthy. Eggs are one of the few food sources of vitamin D, for healthy bones

and muscles, and they also provide iodine for making thyroid hormones and supporting metabolism.

Nutritional differences exist between the various types of eggs and these are influenced by the diet of the birds that lay them. For example, eggs from organic, pasture-raised hens have been shown to contain more omega-3 fats and less of the inflammatory omega-6 than ones from commercially raised hens. There are also differences between different types of eggs. Compared to chicken eggs, duck eggs contain more nutrients, protein and omega-3s and are richer in choline – a B vitamin important for brain and liver health; quail eggs are higher in energising B vitamins and goose eggs contain more vitamin A, D, and E and B vitamins.

So why not try a different sort of egg this Easter with our fun recipes for tasty treats?

GLUTEN-FREE HOT CROSS MUFFINS

A fabulous alternative to traditional hot cross buns, these use duck eggs to give them a delicious light and fluffier texture. You can keep the sugar low by using xylitol.

Makes 12 large muffins

Preparation time: 15 mins

Cooking time: 35 mins

Per serving: 396 kcals, 24g fat – 10.7g saturates – 38.6g carbs, 17.1g sugars, 6.1g protein, 0.8g fibre, 0.3g salt

- **Butter** 225g, at room temperature
- **Xylitol or caster sugar** 175g
- **Ground almonds** 150g
- **Plain gluten-free flour** 100g
- **Mixed spice** 1 tsp
- **Ground cinnamon** ½ tsp
- **Baking powder** 2 tsp
- **Sea salt** pinch
- **Orange** 1, zested
- **Orange juice** 3 tbsps
- **Duck eggs** 2
- **Mixed dried fruit** 200g
- For the icing**
- **Icing sugar** 60g
- **Orange juice** 1-2 tbsps

- 1** Heat the oven to 180°C and line a muffin tray with cases.
- 2** Beat the butter and xylitol in a food processor until pale. Add the almonds, flour, spice and baking powder and beat briefly. Add the salt, orange zest and juice and eggs. Beat to form a thick batter. Stir in the dried fruit.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases and bake for 30-35 mins until they are well risen and golden brown. Insert a skewer into the centre of a muffin – if it comes out clean, they are done.
- 4** Mix the icing sugar with the orange juice to form a thick icing. Spoon into a piping bag and pipe crosses over completely cooled muffins.



STRAWBERRY PAVLOVA

Using duck eggs gives this pavlova a fabulously light texture. Fresh eggs are best for pavlova because the proteins in the eggs are tightly folded, resulting in a more stable structure when they are whisked. Allow the eggs to come to room temperature to make it easier to separate the whites from the yolks. They will also whip quicker. Any fruit can be used in this recipe, including bags of frozen berries for ease.

Serves 12

Preparation time: 20 mins

Cooking time: 1 hour

Per serving: 226 kcals, 13.7g fat – 8.4g saturates – 22.6g carbs, 22.1g sugars, 2.1g protein, 1.9g fibre, 0.1g salt

- Duck egg whites 4 or goose eggs 2, at room temperature
- Sea salt pinch
- Caster sugar 225g
- Cornflour 2 tsp
- White wine vinegar 1 tsp
- Pure vanilla extract 1 tsp

For the filling

- Strawberries 600g
- Double cream or crème fraîche 300ml

- 1** Heat the oven to 150°C. Using a pencil, mark out the circumference of a dinner plate on baking parchment. Place on a baking tray.
- 2** Whisk the egg whites with a hand mixer until they form stiff peaks. Whisk in the salt and sugar, 1 tbsp at a time, until the meringue looks glossy. Whisk in the cornflour, vinegar and vanilla.
- 3** Spread the meringue in the parchment circle, making the sides a little higher than the middle. Bake for 1 hr, then turn off the heat and let the pavlova cool completely inside the oven for 1 hr.
- 4** Once cool and ready to serve, blend 100g of strawberries to form a purée.
- 5** Whip the cream to form soft peaks. Chop the remaining strawberries and fold half into the cream. Spoon into the meringue. Top with the remaining strawberries and drizzle with the purée.

Goose eggs have a rich, creamy flavour and are delicious served with asparagus or truffles for a special occasion. They are the equivalent of two and a half hen eggs in size, so one egg would be perfect to make an omelette or a breakfast treat.

GRILLED ASPARAGUS WITH POACHED EGGS AND DUKKA SPRINKLE

Fresh asparagus and soft poached egg is a dream combination. Those fresh green spears really enhance the flavour and by adding a sprinkle of dukka (a nut and spice blend), this dish has an additional kick. This is perfect for a Sunday brunch, and by preparing the dukka in advance, it's simple enough to whip up in the morning. Any type of egg would work – try a goose egg, which is higher in fat and cholesterol than duck or chicken, for an indulgent treat.

Serves 2

Preparation time: 15 mins

Cooking time: 25 mins

Per serving (using duck eggs):
333 kcals, 22.6g fat – 3.8g saturates
– 12.9g carbs, 1.8g sugars, 17.4g
protein, 4.1g fibre, 1g salt

- Asparagus spears 10
- Olive oil 1 tbsp

- Sourdough or rye bread 2 slices
- White wine vinegar ½ tsp
- Duck or chicken eggs 2
- Black pepper to taste
- For the dukka**
- Hazelnuts 40g
- Sunflower seeds 1 tbsp
- Fennel seeds ½ tsp
- Cumin seeds 1 tsp
- Black peppercorns 1 tsp
- Coriander seeds 1 tbsp
- Sesame seeds 1 tbsp
- Nigella seeds ¼ tsp
- Sea salt, pinch
- Paprika ½ tsp

1 Heat the oven to 180°C.

2 Make the dukka. Spread the nuts on a baking tray and place in the oven for 20 mins. Remove and allow to cool. Heat a frying pan and dry roast all the seeds for a couple of mins. Place everything in a food processor and pulse briefly to coarsely chop up the nuts. This can

be kept in an airtight container for 2-3 weeks.

3 Trim the woody base from each spear of asparagus. Heat a little oil in a griddle pan. Once hot, add the asparagus and cook for 2-3 mins on each side until softened. Remove from the pan then add the sourdough bread and toast lightly in the pan.

4 Meanwhile, bring a large pan of water to the boil, adding the vinegar. Break each egg carefully into a ramekin. When the water is at a rapid boil, swirl it with a spoon then quickly lower each ramekin into the centre of the water, releasing the eggs. Poach the eggs in simmering water for 3 mins. If using goose eggs, allow a couple of extra mins. Carefully lift out with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.

5 Place the bread on plates, top with the asparagus and then the poached egg. Scatter over 1 tbsp of dukka.



Quail eggs may be small but they pack a nutritional punch. They are rich in protein (13 per cent compared to 11 in chicken eggs) and contain plenty of vitamin A, which is important for immune and eye health, and potassium, which can help lower raised blood pressure.

QUAIL SCOTCH EGGS

These are delicious little mouthfuls of goodness and perfect as a protein-packed snack too. Quail eggs are much smaller than chicken eggs, but the flavour is similar. They are perfect soft boiled as a snack or hard boiled and added to curries or salads.

Makes 6 eggs

Preparation time: 15 mins

Cooking time: 23 mins

Per serving: 159 kcals, 8.7g fat – 2.8g saturates – 12.9g carbs, 1.3g sugars, 6.8g protein, 0.9g fibre, 0.4g salt

■ High quality sausages 150g

■ Smoked paprika ¼ tsp

- Dried mixed herbs ¼ tsp
- Sea salt pinch
- Black pepper pinch
- Plain flour 1 tbsp
- Free-range egg 1, beaten
- Breadcrumbs 75g
- Quail eggs 6
- Olive oil for frying or brushing

1 Open the sausages and squeeze the meat onto a plate. Season with the paprika, herbs, salt and pepper. Mash the meat with a fork.

2 Place the flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs in separate bowls.

3 Put the quail eggs into a small pan. Pour over boiling water and cook for 2 mins. Run cold water over the eggs for 2-3 mins to cool.

4 Peel off the shells. Flour your hands. Take a small piece of sausage meat and flatten it out between your palms. Place an egg into the middle, then carefully shape and mould the sausage meat around the egg. Repeat with all the eggs, then coat them with flour.

5 Transfer them to the bowl of beaten egg, then roll them in the breadcrumbs. They can now be chilled in the fridge until you are ready to cook them.

6 To cook, either fry them in oil for 4 mins or for a lower-fat option, drizzle over some olive oil and bake in the oven at 200°C for 20 mins until crisp and golden.

CELEBRATION PIÑATA CAKE

This fun celebratory cake is very indulgent but a great alternative to traditional simnel cake.

Makes 1 cake/Serves 16

Preparation time: 20 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Per serving (using hen eggs):

600 kcals, 33.1g fat – 20.2g saturates

– 69.4g carbs, 29.3g sugars, 5.5g

protein, 1.2g fibre, 0.3g salt

■ **Unsalted butter** 375g

■ **Xylitol or caster sugar** 375g

■ **Vanilla extract** 1 tsp

■ **Free-range chicken eggs** 6 or large goose eggs 3 or duck eggs 6

■ **Self-raising flour** 340g

■ **Cocoa powder** 35g, sifted

■ **Chocolate curls or sprinkles**

Vanilla buttercream icing

■ **Butter** unsalted 200g, softened

■ **Icing sugar** 400g, sifted

■ **Vanilla extract** 1 tbsp

For the centre

■ **Mini chocolate eggs, sweets or Smarties**, about 100g

1 Grease and line 3x20cm cake tins. Preheat the oven to 160°C.

2 In a food processor, cream together the butter and xylitol until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the vanilla extract and eggs with the flour and cocoa powder.

3 Divide the mixture between the three tins and bake in the oven for 25-30mins until golden on top and springy to the touch.

4 Allow to cool then transfer the

cakes to a wire rack to cool.

5 Prepare the icing, beating together the ingredients until light and fluffy.

6 Level the tops of the three cakes using a sharp serrated knife.

7 Cut out the centres of two of the cakes with a round cookie cutter or knife to create two rings.

8 Set the first ring cake layer onto a cake board and sandwich together with the next ring cake layer using a little of the icing. Fill the centre of the ring with your chosen goodies.

9 Coat the top of the ring layer with icing and place the complete round cake layer on the top to cover. Coat the top and sides of the cake with the remaining icing.

10 Decorate with chocolate curls, sprinkles and chocolate eggs. 🍪

Duck Eggs are slightly larger than chicken eggs and have a richer flavour. They have a higher fat and cholesterol content, but are also higher in protein. This gives them more gelatinous properties, which gives desserts and cakes a fluffier texture.





Mouthwatering flavours and seasonal ingredients are guaranteed in these delicious new healthy dishes from 'The Medicinal Chef' Dale Pinnock.

Lovely LIGHT LUNCHES

HONEY MUSTARD, WATERCRESS & RADISH SALAD

This salad is packed with fiery flavours, with a wonderful spectrum of nutrients to boot. Spinach is full of beta-carotene, which is the plant source of vitamin A and important for the health of your skin and eyes. And radishes contain a great deal of flavonoids, which are beneficial for heart health.

Serves 2

- Watercress 50g
- Baby spinach leaves 2 handfuls
- Radishes 4-5, sliced
- Cucumber ½, cut into batons
- Fennel bulb ½, cut into thin matchsticks

For the dressing

- Honey 2 tsp
- English mustard 1 tsp
- Light soy sauce 1 tsp
- Olive oil 1 tbsp

- 1 Combine all the salad ingredients together in a bowl.
- 2 Mix the dressing ingredients until smooth and golden.
- 3 Dress the salad and toss well before serving.

*Give your
skin, eyes
and heart
health a
boost with
this fiery
salad*



White miso is available online and in many supermarkets. It is important not to use brown miso in this dish, as it is too salty.

MISO SALMON WITH GARLIC SPINACH & CARROT GINGER PURÉE

This is such a gorgeous dish: a combination of a few of my favourites from around the world. Salmon is one of the richest sources of omega-3 fatty acids on the planet. A regular intake of good fats can have an amazing impact on heart health. They help to maintain a healthy brain and nervous system too.

Serves 2

- Large carrots 3, cut into chunks
- Root ginger 1.25cm, peeled and finely chopped
- Vegetable stock 400ml
- Sweet white miso 1 tbsp
- Toasted sesame oil 2 tsp
- Honey 1 tsp
- Olive oil for oiling and cooking
- Salmon fillets 2
- Garlic clove 1, finely chopped
- Sea salt
- Baby spinach 2 large handfuls

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C.
- 2 Place the carrots and ginger in a saucepan and add enough stock to almost cover the carrots. Simmer until the carrots are soft, then blend to a smooth purée; keep warm.
- 3 Mix the miso, sesame oil and honey with 2 tsp water.
- 4 Lightly oil a baking sheet and lay the salmon fillets onto it. Spread the miso mixture over the salmon, reserving some.
- 5 Bake at the top of the oven for 25 mins, spreading the remaining miso mixture over the salmon halfway through cooking.
- 6 Sauté the garlic in a little olive oil, with a pinch of salt, for about 2 mins until it begins to turn aromatic. Add the spinach and sauté until wilted.
- 7 To serve, add a generous spoonful of carrot ginger purée to two plates and spread it out. Place the spinach on top, then add the salmon fillets.



ROAST PORK WITH APPLE & FENNEL PURÉE

This is one of my favourite Sunday lunches. The purée is an amazing twist on traditional apple sauce, and the flavours work so beautifully together. I wouldn't have this every day, but it's a great example of how you can enjoy traditional favourites and get plenty of health benefits at the same time. Roasting and baking make the preparation of these ingredients a joy.

Serves 2-3

- Apples 2, cored and cut into wedges
- Large fennel bulb 1, sliced
- Olive oil for drizzling
- Pork belly roasting joint 1.3kg

- Sea salt
- Purple sprouting broccoli 150g
- Red chilli ½, thinly sliced (optional)

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C.
- 2 Put the apple wedges and fennel in a roasting dish and rub lightly in olive oil. Roast for 30 mins or until soft and turning golden at the edges, i.e. when they squash easily when squeezed. Remove and set aside, then increase the oven temperature to 220°C.
- 3 If the pork skin is not already scored, score it at regular intervals. Drizzle a small amount of olive oil over the skin, along with a generous pinch of salt, and rub

into the scores. Place in a roasting tray and roast at the top of the oven for 15 mins until the skin starts to blister and turn golden. Reduce the temperature to 180°C and roast for another 2-2½ hrs, regularly checking the crackling: crispy is perfect, burnt is bad.

4 While the pork is cooking, place the roasted apple and fennel in a food processor with 2-3 tsp water, and process to a smooth purée. Alternatively, you can leave the apple and fennel whole.

5 When the meat is almost done, steam the broccoli for 5-6 mins, until just tender, adding a little chilli if you like. Serve with the purée, pork and crackling.



Pork is a great source of the B vitamin thiamine, which helps energy levels

SESAME-CRUSTED TUNA WITH LIME, MANGO & CHILLI COULIS & PAK CHOI

Tuna is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are vital for almost every aspect of our health. Try to buy the freshest possible. Olive oil contains oleic acid – one of the factors that make the Mediterranean diet so healthy.

Serves 2

■ Olive oil for cooking

■ Pak choi 225g

■ Sesame seeds 3 tbsp

■ Tuna steaks 2

■ Sea salt and black pepper

For the coulis

■ Large, very ripe mango 1, peeled, pitted and roughly chopped

■ Lime ½, juiced

■ Red onion ¼, roughly chopped

■ Small red chilli 1

1 Blend the coulis ingredients to a smooth purée. Pour this mixture through

a fine sieve into a saucepan, pushing it through with a spoon.

2 Heat a little oil in a frying pan and gently sauté the pak choi until wilted.

3 Sprinkle the sesame seeds onto a large plate and mix in a little salt and pepper. Press the tuna steaks onto the seeds so they stick. Flip the steaks and coat the other sides too.

4 Heat 1 tbsp oil in a wide frying pan and, when hot, place the tuna in the pan. Fry for about 3 mins on each side, turning them as gently as possible so as not to knock the seeds off.

5 Warm through the coulis and pak choi. Divide the pak choi between two plates, placing it in the centre. Slice each tuna steak and place the slices on top of the pak choi, then drizzle the coulis over the top. 🍴



Recipes from *How To Cook Healthily* by Dale Pinnock (£20, Quadrille). Photography by Issy Croker.

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- **6 steps to a sharper brain: all by**
supporting your 'crystalised intelligence'

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES.

IF YOU WANT TO enjoy spring with renewed vigour, try this super green juice. It has double powers as it detoxifies your body, then fills you up with an energy-boosting combo of antioxidants, minerals and vitamins. Green really does mean go!

SPRING GREEN ENERGY JUICE

Serves 1

- Small green apple 2
- Spinach handful
- Dandelion leaves handful
- Matcha powder ½ tsp

Decore and juice the apples, then blend with the torn up dandelion leaves, spinach and matcha powder until smooth. Add water if you want it less thick.

MATCHA POWDER

is a top quality, powdered green tea, which contains natural caffeine as well as L-theanine to give you a slow release of energy for up to six hours. We love Teapigs matcha sachets (£12, teapigs.co.uk).

GREEN APPLES

contain less sugar than red ones, so you're less likely to get an energy dip after eating them. For a speedier alternative, add 1.5ml of Stur Goodness Green Apple (£3.49, sturdrinks.eu) to 200ml water. A serving contains zero sugar and more than your daily needs of antioxidant vitamin C.

DANDELION LEAVES

contain bitter enzymes that help rid your liver of toxins, thus improving your energy levels. A handful of these everyday garden greens also contains nine per cent of your daily energy-boosting magnesium needs.

SPINACH

is one of the best plant-based sources of iron – a mineral that's essential for keeping your energy levels up throughout the day.

WE'LL DRINK TO THAT!

ENERGISING GREEN JUICE

This refreshing drink will invigorate you and top up your body with seasonal nutrients.

Loving the HEALTHY LIFE

Discover how readers are making the most of our top tips and articles, as well as a few of the healthy things we've been up to.

RURAL RELIEF

After receiving my issue of *Top Santé*, I just had to write in with my health news. After turning 45 I decided I needed a change. Life was so hectic; we own a successful business – not to mention I work in another job too – run a house and have two young children and a dog. Life was a constant rush. I even used to squeeze in going to the gym to try to relax. After much thought we sold our family home and purchased a new one in an area that's quite rural. I cancelled my gym membership and decided to walk more and enjoy the fresh air. Life feels so much easier. Being able to put my wellies on and get outside is absolutely fantastic and such a stress reliever. I have never felt better. A walk in the countryside is so therapeutic; I thoroughly recommend it!

Mandy Melvin, Rossendale, Lancashire.



Congratulations Mandy, you've won Purelogical products worth £131 including Cellular Renewal Face Wash and Collagen Peptide Skin Supplement.

NEXT MONTH'S STAR PRIZE

Tell us your health stories via email talkback@topsante.co.uk, facebook.com/TopSanteMagazine or twitter @TopSanteUK.

The winner of next issue's star letter will win a Jewellery Box hamper (jewellerybox.co.uk), which will include an Abella Bee necklace and bangle, plus a crystal heart and leaf ring.

Worth £100

FEELING FLEXIBLE

I have been following the yoga exercises in your magazine, which have been very helpful. I combine this with a weekly lyengar yoga class in my local community centre, which I have been doing for 18 months. I am a young-minded 63-year-old, and this has enabled

me to become a lot more flexible and fit. My strength has increased and a problem with osteoarthritis in my knee has considerably improved. Thank you so much for featuring exercises that enable people of all ages to take part. **Gaynor Spencer, Wolverhampton, West Midlands**





Claire's English springer
spaniel Trigger.

I have started taking my dog on 'power walks'. This benefits us both as he is young with lots of energy so makes sure I maintain a good fast pace. I definitely feel like I've had a workout when we finish.

Claire Bolam, Denbighshire

EASY LISTENING

I don't have much downtime so I found myself yearning for ways to calm my busy life even a little. After a recommendation from a friend, I came across the podcast *The Mindful Kind* (free, iTunes), which provides me with plenty of ideas about how to incorporate mindfulness into my life with subjects such as productivity, creativity and sleep. I love to listen while I am on my morning commute and when cooking or cleaning. It makes mundane tasks a lot more fun! Lucy Parsons, Anfield, Liverpool



I love Nordic walking. It's invigorating and good for my joints. I've made so many friends doing it, which has been great. I really look forward to it.

Maria Petrou, North London



Maria (right) on an invigorating Nordic walk with friends.



TOP INSPIRATION!

I wish I had read *Top Santé* sooner! I work as a dentist and we have the magazine in our waiting room. I picked up the December 2016 issue one

lunchtime and found it positive, inspiring and life changing.

I now start the day with a few simple yoga moves and some calming meditation. I have joined the gym, attend a Pilates class, which I absolutely love, and have

started swimming lessons. I try to walk to work and leave the car behind, although in this weather that can be a challenge!

I've realised that a few simple lifestyle changes and being mindful of your body and thoughts can really bring positivity into your life. I intend to get fit, healthy and happier in 2017, and *Top Santé* is a great magazine to keep me motivated and inspired on my new journey.

Afshan Mirza, Kent

TEAM TALK



I have recently gone gluten-free. The benefits have been amazing,

including reduced tiredness and bloating. I've struggled giving up cake though, so I was really pleased to find Delicious Alchemy's range of baking mixes. My favourite has to be the Gluten & Dairy Free Chocolate Brownie Mix (£2.99, delicious alchemy.com). I am very inexperienced with baking but even I found these super easy and quick to make and they're delicious! Aimee Beckett, designer



I've got a holiday coming up, so I'm strengthening my gut bacteria (and hopefully dropping a few pounds). I'm eating in 'windows', having my last main meal at 7pm and not eating breakfast until 10, meaning an overnight fast of 15 hours. Studies show that this is the time it takes for your good gut bacteria to focus on colonising, rather than digesting food, with a result of primed digestive and immune systems ready for tropical climes!

Katherine Watt, features editor

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The Yoga teachers
Stella Shakerchi and
Chris Leuenberger



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Temperatures in May are perfect as it's near Seville, Alhambra, Granada and Malaga.

Up to three yoga classes are taught each day by Chris Leuenberger (chrisleuenberger.com) and Stella Shakerchi, both 500hr RYT Yoga Alliance certified. Email stella@theyogabeat.co.uk and for more information visit theyogabeat.co.uk

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EXPERT Q&A



Q I'm currently experiencing menopausal symptoms, including increased body odour. What lifestyle changes could I consider to minimise these issues?

A One of the most common symptoms of the menopause is hot flushes, and these sudden moments of heightened body temperature typically lead to increased sweat production and body odour. Traditional antiperspirants work by plugging your pores, effectively stopping you sweating (no sweat, no smell). However, sweating is important for temperature regulation – particularly where hot flushes are

concerned – so by plugging pores you are stopping your body from working as nature intended. Instead, why not try switching to a natural deodorant, as these work by leaving a thin layer of mineral salts on the skin, inhibiting the growth of odour causing bacteria whilst still allowing you to sweat. Not only will deodorants like these provide long-lasting protection from body odour, but their all-natural ingredients will be kind to your skin

too (although we would always recommend completing a patch test before using any new product for the first time).

● Try a Salt of the Earth Natural Deodorant today with our Top Santé offer. To get 25% off your first online order, go to check out and simply enter discount code: TOPSANTE25. Crystal Spring 023 8026 7143 www.crystalspring.co.uk

Q I have read that 5HTP is a popular food supplement that can boost mood, especially in the darker months. What is 5HTP, and which supplement should I be looking for?

A Feeling uplifted in the winter months can be a whole lot easier thanks to 5HTP. This mood-boosting nutrient comes from the essential amino acid L-tryptophan, which is found naturally in protein-rich foods. Once L-tryptophan is absorbed, your body converts it to 5HTP, which is then used to make serotonin, the neurotransmitter that's dubbed the 'happy hormone' because of its role in creating happy feelings. But you'd need to eat an awful lot of protein to make a lot of 5HTP, which is why a lot of people, especially those feeling depressed or suffering with SAD, increase their levels with a supplement.

Silvertown Health 5HTP Complex Plus is superior to many on the market as it not only contains 100mg of natural 5HTP but also added vitamins, minerals and amino acids that support the mood-boosting effects. These include: vitamins B6, C and D, folic acid, zinc, L-theanine and L-phenylalanine. Silvertown Health 5HTP Complex Plus is also suitable for vegetarians and is made in the UK to GMP standards. It costs £14.97 for 90 capsules.

Top Santé offer: All first orders will receive a free home spa facemask.

The product is also on buy 2 get 1 free until 24th April 2017. Call 0345 0956 903 (24hrs) or visit www.silvertownhealth.co.uk



Q I live an active lifestyle but as I get older I can't help noticing more aches and pains. Is there anything I can take that will help?



A As the years pass, the cells of our bodies find it harder to stay plumped up, especially with the loss of hyaluronic acid (HA). HA helps to lubricate joints and without it, stiffness and sometimes pain can occur. Novisyn+ is a non-animal derived liquid oral supplement designed to top up your body's natural HA levels, helping to maintain healthy joints. As a liquid, Novisyn+ can be easily absorbed, getting to work quickly. It also has the added benefit of

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Q I need to wear compression socks but really struggle to get into them, are there alternatives?

A Gradient compression hosiery can sometimes be a little tricky to get into. The nature of the hosiery is to exert a gentle pressure from the ankle, which gets less and less up the length of the Leg. This action effectively improves blood flow for prevention or relief of swelling, varicose veins, leg fatigue, heavy feeling legs and venous insufficiencies. We recommend trying Core Spun Support Socks, made with ultra-stretchy yarns. They are easier to get on, more comfortable to wear and the MicroCool ingredient keeps feet dry, odour free and healthy. They feature non-restrictive top bands, roomy toe areas, and even look like your normal, everyday socks in a choice of Black, White, Navy or (just launched) 3 pattern designs.

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At 16 I went to a performing arts college to train to be a professional dancer.

For three years I trained up to 12 hours a day. At that time, I knew nothing about nutrition so I'd eat less to lose weight. At my thinnest I was under eight stone and I'm 5ft 6in, but I'm now 9½ stone, a lean size eight and I'm happy with myself. It took me a long time to have a healthy attitude to food but I'm finally there. Becoming a mum was a big part of that because when I was pregnant I had to feed myself and the baby. Now I want to be a good role model to my daughter Scarlett. I don't want anybody talking about losing weight in front of her.

I don't feel alive unless I'm physically active.

In 2000 when I had depression, exercise was missing from my life but it was one of the things I needed to get back to health. Fitness isn't just about the physicality, it's about how it affects you mentally.

Five years ago I decided to say 'yes' more often. I was invited to enter a triathlon for charity so I agreed. I went into it blindly but I trained myself through YouTube videos and had some swimming lessons. I realised I love a challenge, having a goal to work towards and the fact there's no monotony. I've got good upper body strength and I love being in the water – even outside! Last year [2016] I competed in three



MY LIFE IN HEALTH

Melanie Chisholm

As she gears up for a solo tour, the former Spice Girl is feeling happy and healthy.



Matcha green tea, goji berries and swimming have all played a part in getting Melanie back to top health.

triathlons and I've been bitten by the bug. My training these days is lots of time on the bike, running, interval work and hill climbs.

Meditation is a real discipline for me. I find it difficult to get in the zone so I use the Headspace app, which is guided meditation with a guy called Andy Puddicombe. I also use hypnotherapy apps if I'm travelling and having difficulty sleeping. They're great for relaxing me.

I'm healthier at 43 than I was in my twenties because I'm doing it the right way. In the

morning I have a smoothie made with vegan protein by Sunwarrior and with maca root, which is full of B vitamins and magnesium so great for energy, plus some cacao nibs, which are a great source of antioxidants. I'm into matcha green tea and goji berries – great for the complexion. My boyfriend's a vegetarian but I eat meat and luckily he's happy to cook a roast. He also does an amazing quinoa-based pizza.

I'm very disciplined when I'm touring.

I suffer from acid reflux so spicy food is out, and I never eat dairy or drink alcohol because they're bad for my throat. It can be boring being a vocalist but I've had my fun. Now I love feeling great every day!

Melanie's album Version Of Me is out now and she tours the UK in April – details at melaniec.net.

WORDS: LARISSA CHAPMAN. PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES.

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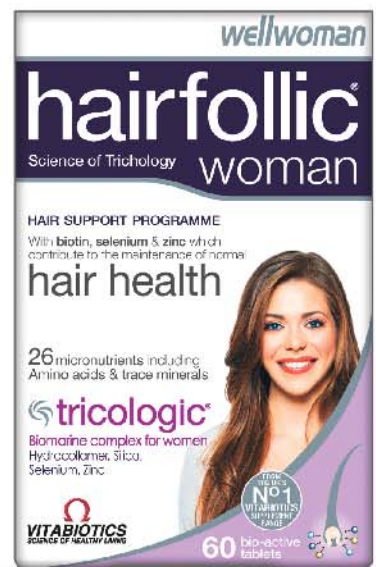
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