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Welcome to Women's Health



There's a date, 11 months ago, that will forever be etched on my psyche. Mother's Day was on 19 March and

my children, Zak and Nell, excitedly woke me up with homemade cards, chocolates and flowers. So far, so normal. But I soon realised I felt odd. And when I was presented with a lovingly made breakfast, I couldn't bring myself to eat it. Within hours, I was vomiting water and retreated to bed, thinking it was gastro flu.

By the following morning, I couldn't leave my darkened bedroom. I was even too ill to summon the energy to set my out-of-office. My mother-in-law, Pam, urged me to see a GP, but I couldn't get out of bed, let alone go to the surgery. By the next day I was delirious, sending nonsensical texts to family; so, Pam took charge and called an ambulance.

'Thank goodness you came in when you did.' With those words from a doctor in A&E, I realised this was serious. I was experiencing sudden, significant kidney failure; perilously close to needing dialysis. It normally occurs in people who are already very ill, with conditions including heart failure or chronic diabetes. I was otherwise healthy, a source of bafflement for the brilliant doctors and nurses who cared for me. Intravenous fluids for 22 hours during my five night in-patient stint got my kidneys working again, but it took two months for me to feel well.

On 21 April this year, exactly 13 months after I was admitted into hospital, I will be running the London Marathon. I don't love

running (weights and Peloton rides are more my thing), but I want to take on a feat that challenges me physically *and* mentally; to prove, following this scary experience, just what my body is capable of.

In partnership with Lululemon, I've recruited four more women who have all overcome personal challenges to join my team and get round those 26.2 miles. The brand makes some of my favourite kit, and their Further initiative – helping women to unlock greater possibilities – speaks directly to our mission at *Women's Health*. (And I'll certainly be looking to, ahem, 'unlock greater possibilities' come race day...) You can follow the highs and the lows on the *WH* site.

Back to this issue, who doesn't love our cover star, Mary Earps? (Sorry, Mary Earps *MBE*.) The way the Lionesses' star stopper speaks her mind and steadfastly pursues her goals makes her an inspiration to me (and my own eight-year-old goalkeeping enthusiast, Nell). And the reigning BBC Sports Personality of The Year certainly lives up to that title in our interview on p24. Elsewhere, discover why more women are becoming 'caffeine-free curious', meet the workout-stacking hack that's perfect for the time-poor and permit yourself a giggle at the latest health-conscious archetype, the Huberman Husband, on p90. As always, I hope you enjoy the issue...

Claire

Claire Sanderson
Editor-in-chief

Follow me on Instagram
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This month,
I'm loving

Lululemon's Beyondfeel trainers

With maximum cushioning, these new running trainers (£148) will see me through training and race day.



Yeti's Rambler Mug

Watching my son play sport on chilly mornings is more bearable when drinking steaming hot coffee from this Yeti mug (£25).



Loop Earplugs

The gossip and chatter of office life is distracting. These Loop Experience Plus Earplugs (£39.95) cancel out up to 18 decibels of noise.



Sézane Clyde Trench (£275). This Parisian brand executes wardrobe staples beautifully – I love the minimal, chic cut.



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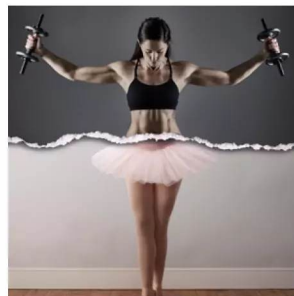
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Mary Earps

Hail Mary, Queen of Stops: the golden-gloved goalie shone in last year's World Cup final *and* won coveted awards. Now, with transfer rumours aplenty, she opens up about her own goals





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Know How

Remember to
unwind every
so often

If you do one
thing this month

Prioritise play

Girlbosses beware: striving for career goals at the expense of fun and freedom can drag down your mental wellbeing. Researchers at the University of Essex tasked more than 180 people across India, Turkey and the UK with recording daily diary entries for nine days about how different values affected them. Those who prioritised 'hedonism' and 'self-

direction' were happier the day after. Those who prioritised 'freedom' had a 13% increase in wellbeing, including better sleep quality and life satisfaction. Moreover, those who relaxed and pursued hobbies noted an impressive 10% drop in stress and anxiety. This, say the study authors, should serve as a timely reminder of the need for balance and recovery, alongside pursuing our goals, to feel fulfilled. So, whether you find mental release by having meandering, pottering days at home, browsing vintage shops with your phone off or gathering your gang to dance the night away to your favourite tunes, make sure you find time for fun. Work harder? Consider this your reminder to play harder.

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The number of minutes of daily moderate to vigorous walking or running required to decrease mortality risk associated with being sedentary for over 12 hours, according to a recent study published in the *British Journal Of Sports Medicine*. Up it to 40 to 60 daily minutes and, per the study, this appears to eliminate sedentary-time risks.

VEG-GENE



Found Veganuary a breeze? You may have a genetic predisposition to vegetarianism. When researchers* analysed the genes of omnivores and vegetarians, they found that two of the three genes more common in vegetarians – NPC1 and RMC1 – are involved in fat metabolism. The team think that those who produce the fat molecules with these genes find vegetarianism easier than those who access them via meat.

TOO MANY FEELS

Empathy is vital for society. Broadly, it's good for you, too – associated with strong relationships and reduced loneliness. But empathy that extends to feeling others' emotions – 'affective empathy' – has been linked in one study to higher levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of chronic inflammation in the body.*

LOST CONNECTION



Brain activity controlling social interactions is suppressed during Zoom versus IRL conversations, according to a neuroimaging study by Yale University. The face-to-face interaction also produced more coordinated brain activity, suggesting a mutual exchange of social cues. Face to face > FaceTime.

News you can use

Want the latest health intel? We've combed the science journals so you don't have to

In the know

Mani-cure

It's official: getting your nails done counts as healthcare. In a recent study by *Frontiers In Psychology*, researchers measured the psychological effects of nail care on 500 women in their twenties and thirties. Participants showed improved relaxation and vitalisation post-mani. Those who visited a salon reported more significant positive emotions than those who self-applied, but this could be linked to chat with their nail techs, say the study authors.



SNOOZE, DON'T LOSE

If your morning alarm makes you groan with dread, take comfort. A new Swedish study found that snoozing every nine to 10 minutes for half an hour before getting up made no difference to sleepiness, mood or sleep quality and may improve cognitive performance compared with getting up immediately.*

MIND OF STEEL

Not eating a mineral-rich diet? Get on that. Spanish research in the journal *Nutrients* examined individuals from their forties to early eighties at high risk of developing dementia. They found that cognitive impairment risk was reduced in women who increased their iron and manganese intake.



THE TO-DO LIST



CELEBRATE
International Women's Day is on 8 March.

Mark the occasion by booking that overdue smear or donating to a charity such as Action Aid. See actionaid.org.uk.



REST
World Sleep Day is on 15 March. Optimise your

slumber by setting the heating to 18°C and treat yourself to a luxury Dusk silk pillowcase (£44, dusk.com).



READ
Mad Woman by Bryony Gordon (£20, Headline).

Eight years after the release of *Mad Girl*, *The Telegraph's* columnist writes about her experiences with parenting, perimenopause, burnout and mental illness. Out now.



Q

Why am I so bad at meditation?

● Oh the irony of wanting to do this ancient practice ‘right’. First, take a deep breath while you enjoy this calming higher truth: there’s no right way to meditate, which means you can’t be bad at it. ‘Meditation is an intentional practice of redirecting yourself away

from your thoughts, and you can practise regardless of your position or the level of noise,’ says Katie Krimer, a clinical social worker. One of the main

reasons people think they’re bad at meditation is an inability to clear their minds, but stopping your thoughts shouldn’t be the goal. ‘[It’s about] having more control over your thoughts rather than feeling like they are controlling you,’ adds Joree Rose, a therapist and meditation and mindfulness teacher. The idea is to allow your thoughts and emotions to occur, observe them without judgment or rumination, then return to the present by focusing on your breath, a mantra or the immediate space around you, adds Krimer. ‘But even having the intention of attempting to train your awareness and observe the workings of the mind is good enough.’ A thought to meditate on.

Q How can I make my new exercise habit stick?

● What separates a January fitness habit from a year-round one can be articulated in two words, says Rachael Welford, a coach at the wellbeing platform TruConnect. It's all about your 'why' and 'how'. On your way to the gym, remind yourself *why* you're choosing to do this, and *how* the work you're about to do will move you closer to that goal. If getting fitter is the aim, for example, then your 'why' might be spending more time being active with your children. 'Keep both long- and short-term goals in mind,' says Welford. An intention to lose 10kg won't offer as immediate a mental boost as a goal to fit in two 5K runs per week. She also recommends habit stacking: attaching a new habit to something you already do. 'If you listen to your favourite podcast every morning, combine this with a walk,' she suggests. Within a couple of months, being outdoors will feel second nature.

//
Don't skip sessions, start habit stacking
//



Q I went out without a coat. Have I now 'caught' a cold?

● Contrary to what your grandma may have told you, no, you haven't 'caught' a cold. A refresher: colds occur when the *weather* is cold, not because the *body* is cold. The mistaken belief likely comes from the fact that dry winter air (through which viruses can be transmitted more easily) and cold temperatures drive people indoors, giving them free reign to cough, sneeze and splutter all over their loved ones and co-workers. Ah, lovely stuff! 'Adults can expect two to three respiratory infections a year,' says Jennifer Johnson, a family medicine physician at the Mayo Clinic Health System, adding that the best way to stay well is to practise good health habits. You know the ones: hitting your NHS-recommended 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week, getting between seven and nine hours of high-quality sleep and making good on your five a day (or 30 a week). But the health habits we picked up in 2020 stand, too. 'Thorough handwashing and avoiding people who are sick,' adds Dr Johnson.

Q Veganuary made me want to go vegan. Any advice for adding flavour to meals?

● You're not the only convert. Back in 2019, plant-based chef Rishim Sachdeva challenged himself to do Veganuary, too. He felt so much better for doing it that he launched Tendril – a series of 'mostly vegan' pop-ups that, last year, found a permanent home, just off London's Oxford Street. Building a vegan menu 'pushes you to be more creative', he says. 'It's about incorporating layers and layers of flavour.' Take fat, for example. While it comes with the territory in meat dishes, with vegetables,

you have to add it yourself via foods such as olive oil and avocados. Next, you'll want to balance that fat with an acid, such as citrus or pickles. Smoking and charring can also add punch, along with a well-stocked store cupboard of herbs, spices and salt. For added sustainability points, Sachdeva tries to find a use for the parts of the plant you wouldn't normally think to keep, fermenting vegetable trimmings, using pickling juice in cocktails and adding beetroot leaves to salads. Bon appétit.

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Is fibre the new protein?

As a leading epidemiologist estimates that 91% of us aren't hitting our fibre intake, dietitian Laura Tilt makes an easy-to-digest case for nutrition's unsung MVP



THE EXPERT

Laura Tilt is a registered dietitian

Spare a thought for fibre. While protein has all the star power for its ability to grow your muscles, fibre's reputation used to be summarised with the flush of a toilet. But

with research pointing to it boosting your microbiome, protecting your heart and reducing your risk of bowel cancer, the nutrient is on the receiving end of a long-overdue PR push.

The fact that 91% of us aren't eating enough fibre isn't new data, but it's a topic that needs more attention. Tim Spector has recently championed this cause, and now, the British Dietetic Association is taking up the mantle: the statistic at the centre of its #FibreFebruary campaign is that the average fibre intake in the UK is 18g, well below the RDA of 30g.

But let's, ahem, back up a bit. Fibre is a carbohydrate that we don't digest or absorb because we don't have the right enzymes. Unlike other carbs (which are absorbed in the small intestine), fibre passes through the gut, ending up in the large intestine where it's broken down by gut bacteria. These clever microbes don't just use fibre for energy, they also unlock beneficial fibre by-products that can positively influence your gut and brain. And the

list of reasons to get enough of the rough stuff doesn't stop there. Recent studies have linked fibre to helping maintain a healthy body weight. Research shows that as fibre intake increases, weight and body fat tend to reduce. Although the mechanisms aren't completely clear, fibre takes longer to digest and helps you feel fuller longer.

Yet, despite being dubbed a life-saving nutrient (per 10g increase in fibre, studies show a 10% drop in risk for any cause of death), all age groups in the UK have missed the memo. Why? Well, there's us boomeranging back to low-carb diets like a no-hope ex, the relentless rise of ultra-processed foods is many people's blind spot. But it's also a food-labelling issue.

Given how hard it can be to determine how much fibre is in your food, that 30g target is, all too often, a currency that only nutritionists understand.

But getting plenty of fibre in your diet is easier than you think. Hitting that magic three-oh can be achieved via five to eight portions of fruit and veg, including starchy foods in your main meals and prioritising fibre-rich snacks such as seeds, nuts and dried fruit. So, if you focus on getting your five a day and make most of your grains the whole variety, you'll be well on your way.



THREE WAYS TO GET ENOUGH OF THE ROUGH

1 MIX IN MORE PULSES

Toss a handful of cooked lentils or chickpeas into a salad or curry for an easy fibre boost. Half a tin contains 6g to 7g.



2 SPRINKLE IN SEED POWER

Add a handful of chia, flax or mixed seeds to porridge or yoghurt and gain an extra 3g to 7g of fibre.



3 UPGRADE YOUR BREAD GAME

Swap out two slices of white bread (2g fibre) for two slices of wholemeal (5g) or rye bread (7g).



Squat and snatch

The single-arm dumbbell snatch ignites nearly every major muscle group from head to toe – need we go on?



WHY WE LOVE IT: Explosive moves that work you *all over* are tough to come by – so give this body banger some love. ‘Your glutes, quads and hamstrings power your legs, while your back, shoulders and triceps come into play as you lift the dumbbell overhead,’ says athlete Taylor Rae Almonte-Roman (pictured). Working one side at a time is also a great way to pinpoint imbalances and improve body awareness. Ready? Let’s go.

STEP 1 **START** in a squat with a dumbbell between your feet, holding it in one hand with an overhand grip.

STEP 2 **SHRUG** your shoulders and engage your core to ‘flip’ the dumbbell, tapping your lower body to support the weight.

STEP 3 **USING** your lower body and core, extend the dumbbell overhead with power. Reverse the move to return to the start.



WORK IT IN
Introduce the exercise as a finisher after your regular resistance training. Start with 3 sets of 5 reps per side.



ADD ON
Start light, even practising with a water bottle just to get the motion. Then progress to a more substantial weight.



FORM CHECK

Think of keeping your shoulders, back and chest ‘proud’ from the squat through the overhead press.



Injury-proof your movement

A common mistake is allowing the dumbbell to swing away from your body as you move out of the squat. Keep it close to your torso.



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Does it really work?

Adult ballet for mindfulness

While not the most obvious source of accessing the mind-body benefits of mindfulness, ballet and other forms of dance could help to focus your mind on the present, as one former dancer discovers



THE GUINEA PIG

Isabel McMahon, WH contributor

Weekends often find

me hitting the dance floor with my friends, but each time I battle the same old demons: embarrassment and lack of coordination.

Lately, my dancing has turned into a series of jumps, points and unexplainable facial expressions. At a recent wedding, my fears got so bad that even the DJ playing my song (Usher, *Yeah!*) couldn't get me on to the dance floor.

As a child, I took ballet on and off but I never stuck with it. By my teenage years, I was keeping my ballet hidden, fearing judgment from the cool kids. Sneaking off to ballet class felt like my deepest secret, and I quit shortly after a big performance. So, when I decided to rekindle my ballet journey after a decade-plus hiatus, I feared the return of that all-too-familiar embarrassment.

The studio I signed up to is dedicated to ex-dancers like me – people who are looking to get their groove back. The minutes leading up to my 'Rusty Ballet' class – its aim is to 'oil up the joints' in out-of-practice bodies – were stomach-churning. But we kicked off with a warm-up relevé – rising on to the balls of your feet – at the barre. Familiar classical piano music played, too, keeping me company as I repeated the steps, feeling at ease.

Then came the section known as 'centre practice', where I faced the same pliés and relevés, this time, without the barre. We moved on to

pirouettes – turns, usually performed on pointe – and finally, adage, which means 'slowly' or 'at a leisurely pace', covering movements performed at a gentler pace. Though I often turned in the wrong direction or lost my rhythm, I noticed I was gaining more and more confidence as the class moved along – or at least losing the ability to care what others thought.

As the session approached its end, I was drenched in sweat – a reminder, if I needed one, that ballet class is as physically demanding as it is mentally. Walking out, I felt a new-found sense of accomplishment and pride in what I'd done, something I hadn't experienced at school. And while returning to ballet hasn't magically erased my dance fears, it did remind me of the importance of rules and foundations.

As a TikTok-obsessed, 70-words-per-minute texter, I've grown so used to living life in autocorrect mode. I'm the master of shortcuts, from sending emoji-laden emails to outsourcing my coffee order to an app. Ballet had the effect of yanking me back to reality. Standing at that barre, obsessing over every finger and joint, felt like a crash course in meditative mindfulness. Maybe my form isn't perfect and my rhythm could probably use some work, too, but the next time I have the opportunity, I'll focus on dancing like no one's watching.

Gain a new
pointe of view

The verdict

Quick results	●●●●●●●●○○
Confidence boosting	●●●●●●●●○○
Mindful movement	●●●●●●●●○○
Long-term solution	●●●●●●●●○○
OVERALL SCORE	●●●●●●●●○○



Is there a quick fix for dull winter skin?



THE EXPERT
Ifeoma Ejikeme,
founder of Adonia
Medical Clinic

The good news is the days are getting longer and the air is gradually warming. On a crisp, sunny day, you can almost smell

spring. But as far as your skin is concerned, it may as well be mid-winter. Months of cold weather can leave it looking as dull as dishwater. So, do you have to wait for summer to get your glow back?

Some dermatology 101. Sub-zero temperatures coupled with central heating are your skin's arch-enemy. Both lead to a lack of moisture in the air, compromising your skin barrier – the protective layer preventing harmful toxins from entering your body. When it sustains damage from dry air, it can't hold on to moisture, leaving it parched and susceptible

to environmental aggressors, such as UV rays, which can make it look lacklustre.

Sound familiar? First, rethink your skincare. Switch to a gentle cleanser without any stripping agents. Take sodium lauryl sulfate – the ingredient that gives cleansers a foamy consistency but can further damage your skin barrier. Next, aim to boost hydration with a serum that contains ingredients such as glycerin and hyaluronic acid – a humectant that draws 1,000 times its own weight in water into the skin. Both are also low irritation and suitable for all skin types.

After your serum, choose a moisturiser containing ceramides. These work by mirroring the skin's building blocks, helping the barrier to retain moisture. It's worth keeping up with acids if you already use them, too. They exfoliate dead skin cells and

reveal the newer, brighter skin underneath. Finally, if you can afford to, now's a good time to treat yourself to a facial. Professional-grade products will address specific skin concerns, while the relaxation and stress relief that facials deliver supports your overall skin health. LED light therapy via at-home masks will also stimulate collagen production.

Skincare aside, brimmed hats and scarves earn you complexion points as well as style points, by shielding your skin from cold winds. While eating plenty of antioxidant-rich plants will support your skin health, and prioritising foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, mackerel, walnuts) will help to regulate the skin's oil production and improve hydration. Wash it down with 2L of water each day and 'dull' will become a word reserved for budget meetings.



**DRY, DULL SKIN?
DON'T KNOW HER...**

1

CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser, £11.50

Formulated with moisture-locking hyaluronic acid and ceramides, this skincare saviour helps to hydrate and protect the skin's barrier while also removing stubborn make-up.



2

Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel, £14.25

This lightweight gel is one of my go-to winter heroes. It deploys glycerin to provide intense hydration without feeling heavy or greasy.



3

La Mer The Concentrate, £190

Designed to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, this formula is packed with wheat flower lipids, sweet almond and eucalyptus oils to help restore your skin barrier and leave you glowing.



4

Beauty Pie Ultimate Anti-Aging Cream, £19

If you prefer cossetting your face in a rich cream, go for this one. It creates a protective barrier against pollution and prevents moisture loss no matter how dry the air is.



What happens when...

...I'm hypnotised?

Groundless superstition saturated in snake oil or trance-formative experiences? We stare directly into this mesmerising practice

01

Focal points

No swinging pocket watches to see here. You can think of hypnosis as 'a naturally occurring state of highly focused attention', says David Spiegel, professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Stanford University and co-founder of the Revery self-hypnosis app. If you've ever been so absorbed in a good film that it felt like the world around you melted away, that's similar to hypnosis. In this state you can be easily influenced – hence its behaviour change associations.

02

Power down

While you might be asked to lie down or sit somewhere comfortable and close your eyes, all hypnosis is self-hypnosis, says Professor Spiegel. 'It's not something I do to you. It's something that I show you how to do.' It has a physiological effect, too; research suggests that hypnosis slows down functions such as heart rate and breathing. 'You're maintaining alertness, but you're turning it inwards.'

Harness the
healing power
of hypnosis

04

Give it up

While you might meditate out of habit, hypnosis is done with an objective. That might be to reduce anxiety, treat addiction or overcome insomnia. If you want to quit smoking, hypnosis allows you to 'try out being a different person', Professor Spiegel says – ie, someone who has no interest in cigarettes and a strong urge to protect their body. Indeed, a 2019 review* suggested self-hypnosis for smoking was associated with a six-month abstinence rate of 20% to 35%. Think of it as a turbo-charged visualisation.

05

Pain control

One of hypnosis' most promising benefits? Pain management. Hypnosis is thought to help filter the signals that pass between your body and brain. One study* found those who are highly suggestible to hypnosis (hypnotisability is a thing) can experience clinically meaningful pain reductions of 42%. Other research has shown that hypnosis can ease both acute and long-term pain and anxiety across a range of conditions. Now that's something we'll harness our subconscious for.

03

Brain science

Hypnosis heightens 'cognitive flexibility', allowing you to explore new ways of thinking. Activity in the brain's salience network – your mind's 'moderator' that evaluates which stimuli deserve your attention – is reduced. 'This part fires up when you hear a loud noise,' says Professor Spiegel, meaning that you're less likely to be distracted. Connectivity is also decreased between your brain areas that process self-awareness and self-reflection.



Ask the

Fit Squad

Meet the
squad

The team share
their go-to
breakfast

Want to run further, lift heavier or nail a pull-up? Each month, we put your questions to the Women's Health Collective panel – eight of the finest fitness brains here to help you make good on your goals



Safe exercise
can alleviate
joint pain

Q I've developed chronic joint pain with age. Can I weight train safely?

India Morse says: First, I'm so glad that you're keen to weight train; there's a common misconception that doing so will increase joint pain, but research shows otherwise. One study* found that lifting weights can reduce arthritis pain by a third, since stronger muscles stabilise – and reduce the pressure on – your joints. Another study* linked weak quads to knee osteoarthritis occurrence.

That weight training can help manage joint pain makes sense: your muscles contracting is what enables your joints to move. When you walk, for example, your thigh muscles contract to stabilise your knee joint. Strong muscles take some of the impact from the movement, which reduces strain on your joints. Less strain means less friction between your joint bones and less cartilage damage – both big contributors to joint pain.

A word of warning though, warm-ups are non-negotiable.

I'd recommend you spend at least 10 minutes warming up per session. Stretching and mobility produces lubricating fluid within your joints, so they'll move easier, which will improve your performance. Next, consider the equipment you use. If you're a beginner, stick to a pair of light/medium dumbbells and perform three reps per exercise. The weight should feel challenging, but not so challenging that you can't finish three reps. You shouldn't feel any pain, either. Incrementally increase these weights by 1kg to 2kg once three reps starts to feel easy – again, without pain or discomfort.

Isometric exercises are also great for joint pain; they're completely static, meaning no joint movement is required, but the muscles surrounding the joints causing you pain still become stronger. Indeed, one study* on people with knee osteoarthritis found that doing just six weeks of isometric quad and straight leg raise exercises

significantly reduced participants' pain intensity. To improve your pain, try holding a glute bridge, wall sit or plank for 30 to 60 seconds per day.

Above all, correct form and technique is crucial. Perform every exercise as slowly as you can; the more control you have over your muscles and joints, the less chance you have of straining them. Ask a friend or PT to spot you, or look to the Women's Health Collective for an endless library of exercise demos and form tips. Focus on your breathing too; when you lift and exhale, you release carbon dioxide from your bloodstream and air from your body, which tightens your core and makes your body more stable. Inhaling as you lower your weight ensures your muscles get the oxygen they need for energy. But, if you're completely new to weight training and suffering with any joint pain, consult your GP for exercises specific to you. It's a joint effort.



Sophie Lait

Body acceptance advocate, PT
Chocolate chip pancakes made with protein powder.



Saima Husain

Online fitness coach and PT
Overnight oats with chia seeds, Greek yoghurt, peanut butter, berries and honey.



India Morse

Inclusivity advocate and PT
Scrambled eggs on toast with truffle oil.



Rosie Stockley

Prenatal and postnatal expert and PT
Homemade muesli with milk, natural yoghurt and berries.



Amanda Ngonyama

Athlete and sports scientist
A cinnamon bagel with scrambled eggs, smoked salmon and avocado.



Michelle Griffith-Robinson

Olympian, life coach and PT
Scrambled eggs and smoked salmon for me, too.



Izzy George

Strength and conditioning coach, PT
An egg white and bacon bagel.



Sanchia Legister

Yoga instructor
A mushroom, tomato and halloumi bagel.

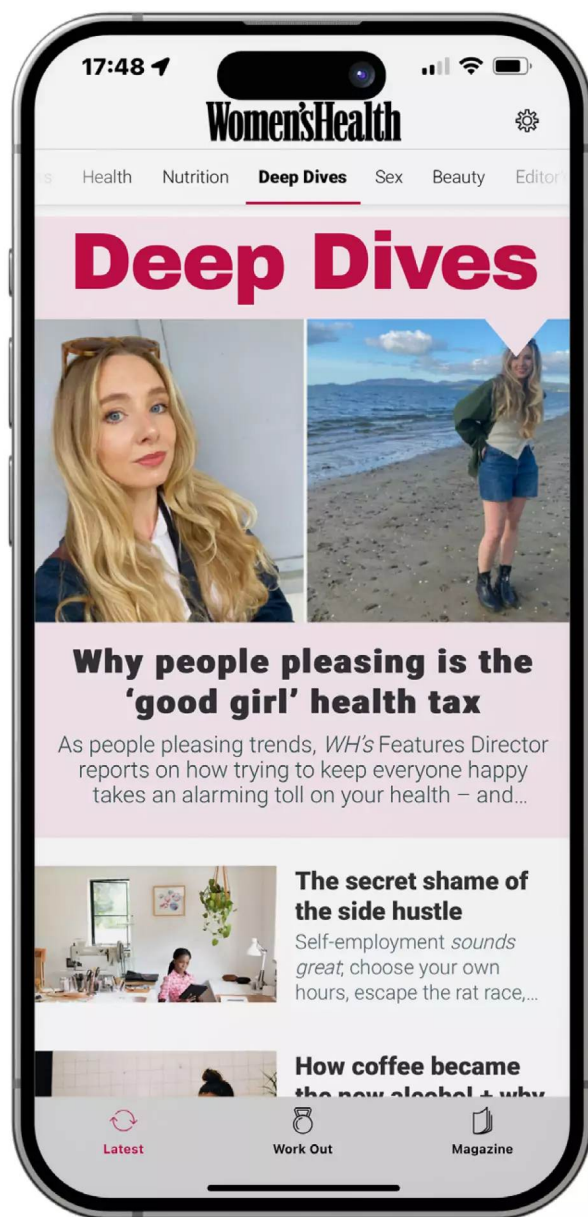


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**MARY
EARPS**

be unapologetically you



Words
Roisín Dervish-O'Kane
Photography
Mark Cant
Styling
Maddy Alford

The Best Fifa Women's Goalkeeper in the world. Sports Personality of the Year. Mary, Queen of Stops. After another winning year, the Lionesses' not-so-secret weapon opens up about her decision to speak out about that Nike football shirt, walking the tightrope between success and burnout, and learning the power of being herself →

If

one's choice of beverage offers some insight into where they're at in any given moment, then Mary Earps's several-hours-old mug of English breakfast – recently reheated in the microwave – speaks volumes. 'I don't know if that's an ick?' she laughs, shaking her head. 'But that's how busy today has been.' A BBC interview preceded our call, no doubt discussing the 30-year-old Lioness and Manchester United goalkeeper's nomination for Sports Personality of the Year, announced the next day. Her triumphant victory surprised no one. Millions fell for 'Mary, Queen of Stops', thanks to her Golden Glove-winning skill, palpable passion and swaggy, sweary celebration when she saved a penalty from Spain's Jenni Hermoso in the 68th minute of last summer's World Cup final.

Fittingly, she earned *actual* Royal approval, too – being granted an MBE in the King's New Year's Honours list, recognised alongside fellow Lionesses Lauren Hemp and Millie Bright. That our cover star is a woman in demand was underscored again as this issue was going to press, when the back pages were swirling with speculation over the identity of Mary's next club, with Paris Saint-Germain the suspected favourite to snap her up in the January transfer window, over fellow purportedly interested parties Arsenal and Barcelona.

But back to that microwaved-brew-kind-of-Monday when we speak: the day saw the Lioness goalkeepers' shirts go on sale for the second time, reportedly selling out on England's online store within five minutes. The privilege of purchasing Mary's shirt (along with the fellow England keepers') was only made possible by her decision to publicly call out the kit's sponsor, Nike, for not making the goalkeeper's shirt available – just as the highest-profile Women's World Cup in history kicked off. It was audacious. It

'I really like to lead by example... I've always believed in leaving the game in a better place'

was spicy. It was the sort of thing that, in most interviews, I'd broach delicately after the interviewee was 'warmed up'. No need today. 'No small talk, that's perfect,' she says, when I warn, up top, that our limited time together precludes any niceties. Fire away.'

Game plan

So... shirtgate. Was it hard to stand up for herself with the whole world watching? 'It was definitely hard,' she says, before clarifying her motivations. 'It was sad on a personal note that my friends and family couldn't buy my shirt, but it wasn't about me. It was more about, I felt, the message being sent to young kids especially, but [also] to a whole demographic of people who have a huge passion and interest in goalkeeping. I felt like they were being shunned.' But 'greater good' intention notwithstanding, this required Mary putting her own name in the headlines. Was there an internal battle about making herself the story? 'One million per cent... I really like to lead by example and be really focused on football. Unfortunately, when it comes to this sort of stuff, sadly that isn't always enough.' While buoyed by the support of her teammates ('they were very much in my corner'), speaking out piled a 'tremendous' amount of pressure on her game. 'If I hadn't performed well at the World Cup [the narrative would have] been like, "Yeah, no wonder no one likes the goalkeeper," [and] "just focus on your job".'

Of course, England made the final, with Mary having had a tournament for the ages. A Change.org petition 'in support of Mary Earps and all female goalkeepers around the world' was created, garnering 170,000-plus signatures. Following her Sports Personality win, Mary told *The Guardian* she'd had 'commitment from Nike that it will never happen again'. Did she get an apology? 'I feel like I've kind of just moved on. We had a few conversations and they acknowledged wrongdoing. I think it would have been nice to have a little bit more of a public acknowledgement... Even



● **OPENING SPREAD:** JACKET, ADANOLA. TOP, MAE27. SHORTS, ALO YOGA. EARRINGS, MARY'S OWN. NECKLACE, GEORG JENSEN. RING (INDEX FINGER), GALLERIA ARMADORO. RING (MIDDLE FINGER), ASTLEY CLARKE

THIS PAGE: TOP, UMBRO. SKIRT, SUSAN FANG. SHORTS (JUST SEEN), KLAYD. NECKLACE, TREATS STUDIO. GOLD BRACELET, MISSOMA. DIAMANTÉ BRACELET, D. LOUISE. THICK GOLD CHAIN BRACELET, ANISA SOJKA. RINGS, AS BEFORE



Mary Earps

today, the shirts have gone on sale, but there's been no advertisement from Nike for that. But, ultimately, the end goal was to get the shirts on sale, and I feel we've achieved that,' she says, diplomatically. '[Hopefully] it encourages kids to keep going, pursuing their dreams and the position that they want to play... I've always been a big believer in trying to leave the game in a better place and trying to leave that legacy. Of course, you always want to do that in the way you play football... But the shirt – I mean, I don't think I'll forget it,' she says, before adding with an impish flex, 'and I hope no one else does.'

If our cover star takes being a role model seriously, it's because her sense of duty has deep roots. She's the eldest of three siblings raised in a Nottingham suburb, by no-nonsense parents whose philosophy was: try new things, see what sticks and go for it. Football – goalkeeping – stuck for Mary; and when her A-levels rolled around, she was playing for Leicester City's first team. 'It teaches you sacrifice from a young age – and priorities,' she says. 'I've always had this thing: a strategy [of] what I am going to focus on, when – and always try to be as planful as possible.' She tells me about spending earnings from toy-shop shifts on

● BELOW: JACKET, FRAME. TOP AND SHORTS, BOTH FREE PEOPLE. NECKLACES AND RINGS, AS BEFORE

RIGHT: CARDIGAN, AXEL ARIGATO. JUMPSUIT, AMADA. EARRINGS, D. LOUISE. DIAMOND NECKLACE, TREATS STUDIO. NECKLACE, D. LOUISE. BRACELETS AND RINGS, AS BEFORE. SOCKS, PANTHERELLA. TRAINERS, ASICS AT THE EDIT LDN



a biology tutor – her weakest subject – to up her chances of getting into uni. The plan bore fruit; she studied business at Loughborough University, balancing club football and classes more effectively than many of us managed when transporting half a dozen Jägerbombs from the student union bar. I tell Mary if she could bottle this clarity of thought, she'd make millions. 'It depends,' she replies. 'It's a gift and a curse, isn't it? When you can't stop thinking about something and you're obsessed with it.'

What Mary can't stop thinking about right now is rest. The holiday she's taking in a few days can't come soon enough. 'It becomes harder to find balance in your life,' she says, of fulfilling club and international commitments alongside the newly revolving door of awards ceremonies, photo shoots and interviews. 'Even



my days off. They're not days off any more.' Does she feel like she's sleepwalking towards burnout? She nods, mouth set in a straight line. You don't need robust psychology creds to understand that Mary's personality – profound sense of responsibility, irrepressible work ethic – renders her a prime candidate. 'I try to base my life around gratitude because I feel like that is the most powerful way to stay motivated; stay happy,' she shares, deep in reflection now. 'Probably the hardest part is the public eye element of it... It's really hard to find a balance between Mary the person and Mary Earps the footballer – the whoever that everyone else thinks that you are.' She talks about

'I base my life around gratitude. I feel like that is the most powerful way to stay motivated'

people clocking her in Tesco, during her coffee run or in a taxi. 'I remember, like, "Oh, I'm not me now. I'm the character me..." I think that's why it feels like you never get that time to yourself. That's why you feel so close to burnout a lot of the time.'

A new era

Speaking of characters, how did she feel about becoming a meme last summer? 'Oh, the penalty thing?' she replies, slightly bemused. 'I didn't realise how big it had got, to be honest, until quite a few weeks after. Because I have quite a few social media filters and stuff in place to try to protect me from the noise,' she explains – 'that's a strategic choice, shock.' It was a raucous, extended cheer – and name chants – when she appeared on Sky's →

Mary Earps

A League Of Their Own that helped her grasp her new status as a cultural figure. 'That was *mind-blowing* to me.' Not for those of us watching, nor for Mary's boss. 'Sarina [Wiegman] said to me after [the World Cup], "I told you life will change... It's rare for a goalkeeper to have had the impact on the tournament that you had."' Those words must be extra meaningful coming from Wiegman. The person who, by inviting Mary back into the England squad in 2021 (she was dropped by then-manager Phil Neville in 2019) reinvigorated her hollowed-out self-belief and transformed her career. But Mary plays it cool. 'I didn't really think of it like [that]. I was just kind of like: look, I'm just doing my job... We were collectively disappointed that we fell short at the end. But I know we gave everything.'

England's eventual loss to Spain wasn't the only thing souring the end of an epic summer of women's football. Mary doesn't want to comment on Luis Rubiales ('that has had far too much airtime anyway'), the former Spanish FA president who faces a three-year ban on 'football-related activities' for kissing Jenni Hermoso on the lips during the presentation ceremony. A kiss that Hermoso has since testified in court was 'at no point consensual'. 'I really commend Jenni Hermoso's strength in that whole situation,' Mary says, adding, 'I don't think it overshadowed the World Cup; I think it overshadowed the Spanish national team's achievements... That's the biggest shame.'

The incident has become a culture war flashpoint, amplifying conversations about sexism in football – alive and kicking at home, too. 'Sport is a vehicle for change, but it's also a representation of society,' she says, pointing to an interview with Emma Hayes. In it, the celebrated Chelsea manager, who's set to be the US women's team coach, powerfully articulates that women in football are used to systemic misogyny. 'The [sexist] comments on that are really telling,' Mary reflects. 'This isn't just what one person thinks, this is what people across the country think – probably in the world. And that's the biggest disappointment to me.'

Is it annoying to be asked about misogyny within the game, as if it's her problem to solve? 'I don't think it's



● TOP, SWEATY BETTY, SKIRT, THE NORTH FACE. EARRINGS, RINGS AND NECKLACES, AS BEFORE. 'M' PENDANT NECKLACE, TREATS STUDIO

'I'm always going to try to be my most authentic self, come hell or high water'

an annoying question; it's just one of those where it's hard to give a calm response,' she says. 'But I don't think having a more, I don't know, *aggressive* response actually helps our cause. That's the irony of the whole situation. And I think anyone who's a woman knows that; it's not just football. I don't

think there are many women in the world that will have not experienced sexism and misogyny of some kind.'

Pitch perfect

Speaking of emotional responses, the rawness of Mary's on-pitch feelings no doubt contribute to the public's fondness for her. We know when she's jubilant, when she's fuming and when – like when England recently failed to qualify for this year's Olympics – she's beating herself up. Is it difficult to be someone with big feelings in front of this newly massive audience? 'I don't really think of myself as someone who has big feelings; maybe that's a lack of self-awareness,' she says, curious rather than bristling over the characterisation. 'I'm not the best at sharing in terms of talking on big stuff. But I think I'm also someone who's quite expressive and wears their heart on their sleeve. I know that's kind of, I don't know, oxymoronic. But I think that's how I perceive myself.'

That our cover star has reflected – strategised, even – about emotional expression shouldn't be surprising. 'When I was a kid and in my early twenties, I used to – I think like a lot of us do – suppress emotions. You push them down, you put them in a box and you try to deal with them at another time,' she shares. And now? 'A few years ago, I feel like I pledged to myself that I was always going to try to be my authentic self, whatever happens, come hell or high water, whether it goes really well or really badly. Just try and just be yourself.' And that, right there, is a goal worth keeping. **WH**

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Eat Smart

Has coffee become



As health-conscious types increasingly talk about being in their post-caffeine era, we take a closer look at what some experts are calling the most socially acceptable addiction

WORDS: LAUREN CLARK



the

new alcohol?



When Hayley Peters and her husband Craig leave the house to take their French bulldog, Diego, for a walk, there's always one thing her other half does that makes her sigh. 'Without fail, he'll be on the lookout for a latte,' reveals the 34-year-old. 'It's the same when we go shopping or watch our five-year-old son play football.' It isn't that Hayley has an unusual ick about men who like milky coffee – she's worried about him. 'He has a busy job in property and will often say how stressed he's feeling – while holding a cup in his hand,' she sighs. Last year, Hayley wouldn't have batted an eyelid – she has her own previous with the aforementioned brown nectar. 'When I moved to London to work in PR and progressively became more senior, I relied on three-shot americanos up to five times a day from coffee shops,' she recalls. 'They cost me a small fortune, but I felt like I needed them to fuel long hours on busy projects. On reflection, I was in a fight-or-flight mode constantly: jittery, prone to emotional outbursts, bordering on insomnia and with a racing heart.'

So, what changed? Hayley charts it back to one – otherwise unremarkable – day earlier this year, when she was sitting on her sofa with her husband. A racing heartbeat convinced her she was having a heart attack and her husband took her to hospital. Two further admissions and numerous tests failed to pinpoint a cause. But when a doctor suggested caffeine may have played a part, she immediately called time on coffee – and hasn't looked back.

Hayley's terrifying experience is one that doesn't usually spring to

mind when considering the hold of the UK's £17bn coffee industry, which sees us sip an average of two cups per day. 'It's the definition of a socially accepted addiction,' says Rachael Molitor, a chartered psychologist focusing on health and behaviour change. In fact, getting a caffeine fix has always felt aligned with ambition and sophistication – in contrast to, say, a cheeky cigarette break or swift post-work sauvignon. But could a four-a-day coffee habit be the latest signifier of someone who's not wholly on their game? Are we, like Hayley, finding



Is decaf
curious the
new sober
curious?

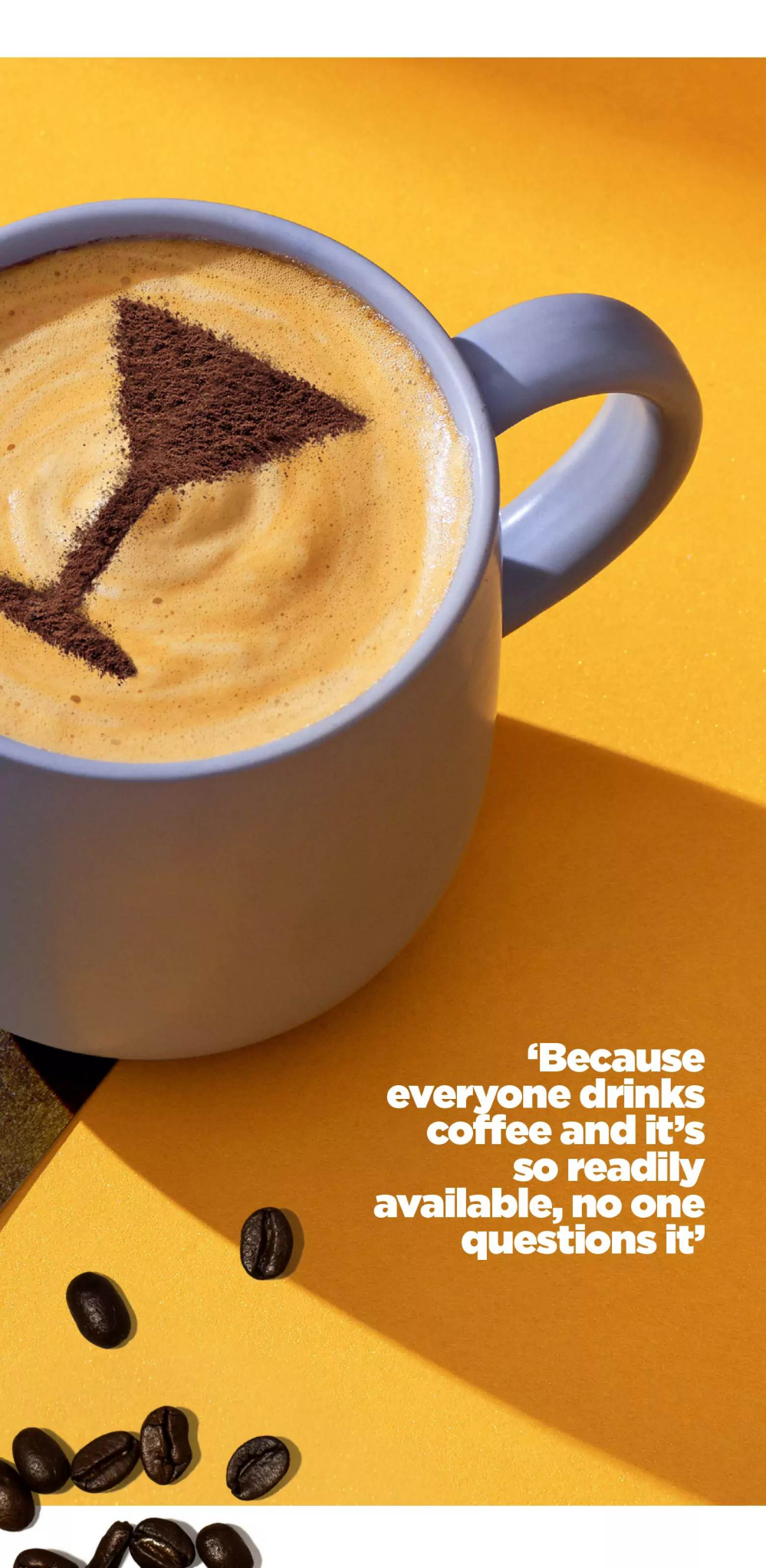
it difficult to unsee the impact of others' caffeine intake – from the anxious colleague always by the office coffee machine to the wired friend clasp a post-4pm cortado? And, as much as we might not like to admit it, struggling not to judge?

Beyond the buzz

The data shows a downward trend in coffee consumption among younger generations – a survey by the Centre for Economics and Business Research revealed that Gen Z drink just 0.5 cups a day, compared with millennials (1.3 cups) and Gen X (2.1 cups). As for when we collectively entered our decaf era? Research published in the *International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health* notes caffeine consumption fell during the Covid pandemic. 'There's been a noticeable shift in recent years towards people re-evaluating their relationship with substances like coffee,' says Dr Molitor. We're more aware of how caffeine affects our bodies (more of which later), plus the ethical and environmental issues entangled in how coffee reaches us, she explains. The cost of living crisis has also priced some people out of their fix.

Evidence that we're taking stock of our coffee reliance can be seen in what we're replacing it with. The decaffeinated coffee market is projected to be worth \$28bn (around £23bn) globally by 2030. Then there's the rise of low-caffeine matcha, which has Kourtney Kardashian obsessed and has led former *WH* cover star Rochelle Humes to launch her own matcha brand last autumn. The growth of 'functional' coffee brands, such as Clevr Blends and Dirtea – whose mushroom coffee contains 80% less caffeine than a regular cup – is also part of the story.

But let's be real, it's not like we're all living in a post-coffee age. Dr Molitor sees evidence of our coffee-soaked culture on the regular. Exhibit A: her students – who she lectures on eating and drinking behaviours at Coventry University – come armed with takeaway cups and flasks. As do her fellow lecturers at conferences. Coffee machines remain key focal points at work, while coffee →



'Because everyone drinks coffee and it's so readily available, no one questions it'

Eat Smart

mornings remain staples of the social calendar for new mums.

'Because everyone drinks coffee and it's so readily available, no one questions it,' she says. 'As humans, we want to fit in and are attuned to following the crowd.' It's why Sophie Trotman, a registered nutritionist, first forced herself into coffee aged 26 after feeling embarrassed about ordering a hot chocolate in front of her boss. Similarly, it's why telling peers you've gone caffeine-free feels almost as radical as going without booze did when the sober-curious movement was starting in 2018.

But first... coffee

One reason why we've not really questioned coffee's outsized role in our routines is because its brand image remains as strong as one of Hayley's erstwhile three-shot

types who tend to lead a more health-conscious lifestyle.

But as many opt for decaf, discussing symptoms of their caffeine climbdown in the office, it raises the question: was the whole notion of caffeine-powered productivity ever legit? In some senses, yes. 'Caffeine, which is the active component in coffee, is a central nervous system stimulant,' explains Trotman. 'It can trigger increased alertness, reduced perception of fatigue and enhanced cognitive function.' This doesn't just mean increased productivity at work and in life, but also boosted physical performance. For example, one study showed it could improve 5K running time by 12 seconds*.

However, caffeine doesn't affect us all in the same way, says Trotman – bodies metabolise it differently. 'One coffee might leave

'Sticking to decaf helps me to gauge how hard – or how slow – I need to go on any given day'

americanos. The glamorous associations can be traced back to the roots of the UK's cafe culture, with the 1651 opening of The Angel coffee house in Oxford (inspired by those already popping up in Venice). 'Unlike pubs – linked to the working class – coffee houses attracted more learned types who would discuss literature or politics,' says Dr Molitor. While this eventually democratised into the traditional British 'caff' during the 19th and 20th centuries, coffee has retained its aspirational associations.

Not least because, for a long time, it was seemingly inextricably linked with education, work and getting shit done. The logical extension being that coffee is integral to success. Just think about the 'But first... coffee' memes that became such a visual hallmark of the now much-maligned 2010s 'girl boss' era. Coffee was as aligned with the Type A millennial in the workplace as the verdant juice and Sweaty Betty printed leggings were to her weekend plans. As research shows, it's often these ambitious, Trello-board-for-social-plans

someone feeling panicked, while another will hardly feel the impact,' she explains. The highest safe daily intake for adults is around 400mg (an americano clocks 50mg to 120mg). Above this point, most of us are likely to experience shakes, jitters and a racing heart – and research has associated five or more cups with panic attacks*. Complicating things further is that we're not all starting from a low baseline each day. 'Modern life is so stimulating – from being on a work Zoom while scrolling through Reels and messaging friends on WhatsApp – the stimulation caused by coffee can easily add to feelings of overwhelm,' says Trotman. 'That's because it can inhibit adenosine and GABA, two neurotransmitters that leave you feeling calm,' explains registered nutritionist Jenna Hope. 'These don't just contribute to anxiety, but can also impact sleep.'

Frighteningly, one study found that consuming caffeine six hours before bedtime reduced total sleep time by one hour*. So, if you have a 4pm cup and hit the hay at 10pm,

it's still in your system. 'Plus, while black coffee suppresses appetite in some, in others it triggers blood glucose fluctuations – especially if you combine it with high-GI oat milk – which can cause a blood sugar dip,' notes Trotman. The way this can encourage you to reach for starchy snacks – combined with the extra calories from sugary add-ons – can trigger weight gain.

Down and out

The other issue, warns Hope, is that coffee intake can obscure underlying energy issues. And, per the rising awareness of prioritising your free time, spearheaded by Gen Z, culling something that affords workplace productivity while fuelling personal life burnout chimes with what aspirational looks like now. But make no mistake, millennials are all over it, too. Jen, a 35-year-old lawyer, who now limits herself to two cups a day, thinks coffee 'feeds into an unhealthy "grind" culture'. While Kejal Ashra-Blundell, the 36-year-old PR director for personalised nutrition company Zoe, agrees. 'Sticking to decaf helps me gauge how hard – or slow – to go on any given day. Come the evening, I'll start to feel naturally tired – I don't believe those who insist that a late afternoon coffee doesn't impact their sleep.'

It might not shock you to learn that *WH* editors reappraising their coffee intake are doing so with their health in mind. Memberships editor Georgie Lane-Godfrey, 35, quit after discovering that caffeine – a bladder irritant – exacerbated her postpartum incontinence. Meanwhile, health editor Claudia Canavan went from knocking back the equivalent of six espresso shots per day to accidentally going cold turkey on a silent meditation retreat in Bali during an eight-week work sabbatical last year.

'The withdrawal symptoms got progressively worse as the days passed,' Claudia recalls. 'I'd wake up in paradise with a head that felt trapped between two planks of wood.' These withdrawal symptoms – which in addition to headaches include fatigue, mood swings and irritability – saw Adele lament during a Las Vegas show in August

Is coffee as
aspirational
as it once
seemed?



last year that quitting coffee felt like 'a drill inside my head' that was harder than giving up cigarettes and alcohol. Post-retreat, Claudia made a beeline for a coffee shop. Three sips into her first 'blissful' americano, however, came panicked thoughts and a pounding heart. Back home, fuelled by doctors' advice that cutting down may help alleviate endometriosis pain, she's down to one daily pot.

Sip on this

The question of whether you need to reduce your intake – or rule out coffee from your routine entirely – is a personal one. But one thing it's important to keep in mind is that while we may be on the cusp of a 'coffee-free curious' movement, we should avoid binary good/bad categorisation. Just think about what happens when the wellness world labels something – like sugar – a nutritional pariah. The obsessive restriction it can foster doesn't tend to end well.

Something else we should be hip to? Judgment about those who do – and don't – make the shift. Because, as Claudia points out, ground up in the debate is that caffeine is so normalised because – even if we've never been one for the girl boss/She-E-O lexicon, the relentless demands of modern life mean we've normalised being so much busier than is good for us. 'In an era of relentless self-optimisation, I'd never judge anyone for needing a coffee,' she adds. 'We're all expected to do too much and, honestly, whatever gets people through.'

Three strategies for the coffee-free curious to build a healthier relationship with everyone's favourite sippable stimulant



Determine if it's habit or addiction

According to Dr Molitor, the former won't have a significant impact on your life – including your work and relationships – whereas the latter does. If you're struggling with persistent low energy levels and poor sleep, seek advice from your GP.



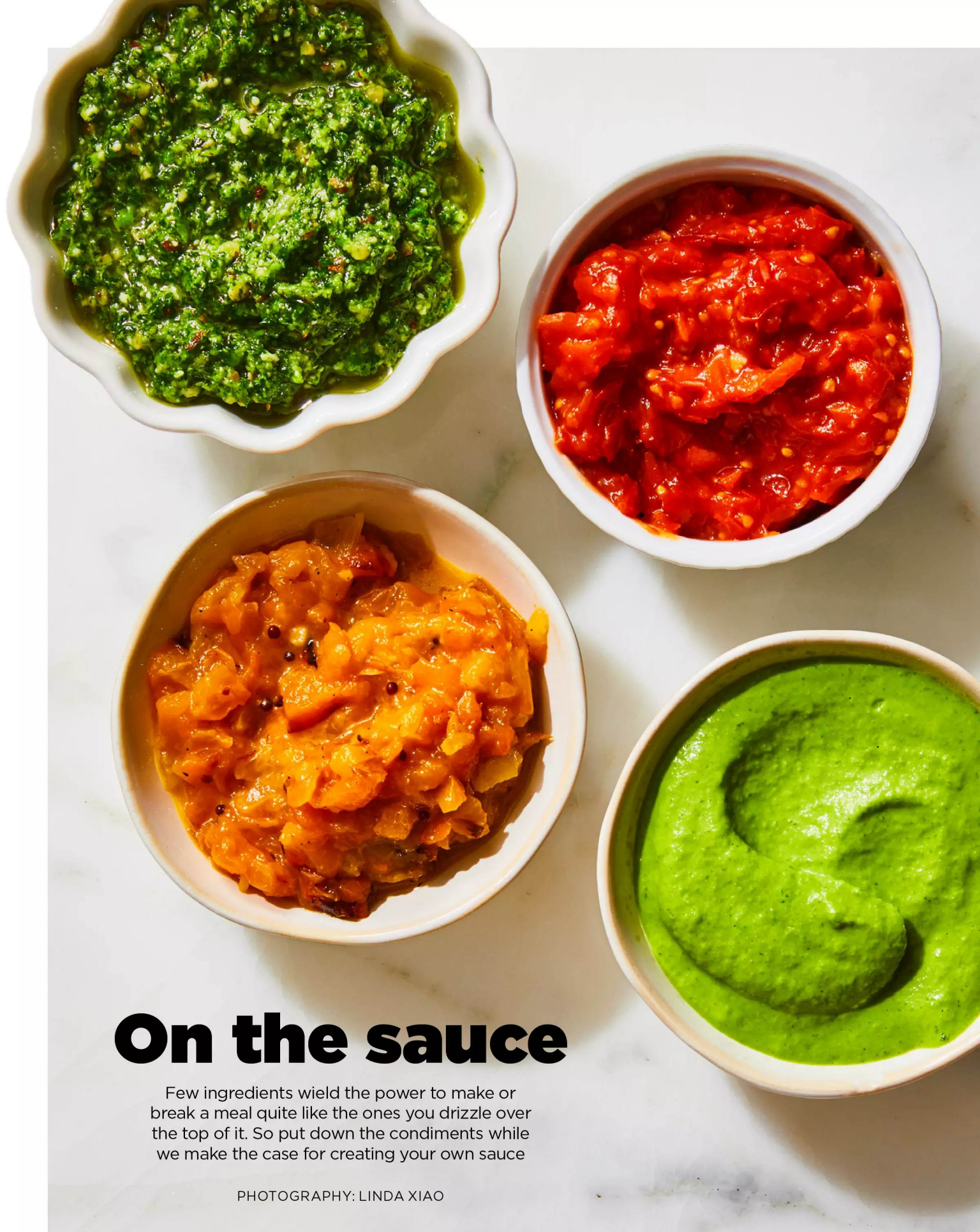
Don't go cold turkey

If you're keen to enter your own post-caffeine era, Trotman advises against a short, sharp stop if you're drinking four or more coffees. You're more likely to experience debilitating withdrawal symptoms, which could cause you to boomerang back to your default caffeine consumption.



Try smart reduction

Keep caffeine (including tea and any other caffeinated beverages) to a smaller window in the morning to (a) help protect your sleep and (b) create a boundary around your coffee consumption. Peruse all manner of caffeine-free stand-ins on the *Women's Health* website. **WH**



On the sauce

Few ingredients wield the power to make or break a meal quite like the ones you drizzle over the top of it. So put down the condiments while we make the case for creating your own sauce

PHOTOGRAPHY: LINDA XIAO

We suspect you don't need us to tell you that sauces are a key player when it comes to getting dinner on the table fast. But when you make them yourself, you can pack them with vegetables, boost flavour and add fibre. And that's not all. Sauces can also offer a variety of vitamins and minerals, says dietitian Jaclyn London, host of *The Business Of Wellness* podcast. 'To make smarter – not harder – food choices, I recommend finding effortless ways to incorporate more plant-based foods into your daily routine.' Challenge accepted. We got to work in the *WH* test kitchen blending up fresh veg. Meet your new sauce squad.

VEGAN VICTORY

Cashews typically require a long soak before being blitzed into a creamy base, but we threw the nuts into boiling water for a fast fix



Edamame spinach puree

Total: **25 mins**

Makes: **415g**

50g **raw cashews**

90g **baby spinach**

85g **shelled frozen edamame**, thawed

Handful of **coriander leaves**

2 **spring onions**, roughly chopped

2 **tblsp white miso paste**

1 **tsp lime zest**, plus

2 **tblsp lime juice**

½ **tsp grated ginger**

01. In a small heatproof bowl, add the cashews and 150ml boiling water. Let it sit for 15 mins.

02. Transfer the cashews and soaking liquid to a blender. Add ¼ tsp salt and puree on high until smooth, about 1 min.

03. Add the spinach, edamame, coriander, spring onions, miso, lime zest and juice, and ginger; puree on high, scraping down the sides as needed until completely smooth.

TO SERVE: Toss the puree with steamed rice, chopped cabbage or sautéed prawns; spoon on to fried chicken or fish.





COLD PLUNGE

Blanching – which involves boiling, then immediately cooling in an ice bath – dials down the bitterness of mustard greens



Mustard greens pesto

Total: **30 mins**

Makes: **400g**

450g **mustard greens**, tough ends trimmed, roughly chopped

70g **roasted unsalted almonds**

1 **garlic clove**, smashed

1 tsp **lemon zest**, plus 3 tbsp **lemon juice**

175ml **olive oil**

40g **basil**

50g **pecorino romano**, grated

01. In a large pot, boil 3L water. Add 1 tbsp salt and the mustard greens; cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly tender, 4 to 5 mins. Meanwhile, prepare a large bowl of ice water.

02. Using tongs, transfer the mustard greens to the ice bath and let it cool for 2 mins. Then, using your hands, squeeze out any excess water.

03. Meanwhile, in a food processor, pulse the almonds, garlic, lemon zest and juice, ½ tsp salt, and 115ml oil until the nuts are coarsely chopped, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Add the mustard greens and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add the basil and pulse again until incorporated.

04. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then stream in the remaining

60ml oil and process until mostly smooth but still slightly chunky. Add the pecorino and pulse until just incorporated into the mixture.

TO SERVE: Swirl your pesto into butternut squash soup; fold 1 tbsp into 2 scrambled eggs for your breakfast; toss with boiled baby potatoes (halved) or roasted carrots.



●●●●●

Gochujang and carrot pomodoro

Total: **50 mins** plus cooling

Makes: **450g**

2 tbsp **rapeseed oil**

2 tsp **gochujang paste**

$\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp **reduced-sodium soya sauce**

2 **carrots** (about 140g), peeled and cut into inch-long pieces

600g **red grape tomatoes**

2 large **garlic cloves**, smashed

01. Heat the oven to 190°C. In a bowl, whisk together the oil, gochujang, soya sauce and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt. Add the carrots, tomatoes and garlic; toss to coat.

02. Transfer the mixture to a rimmed baking sheet (scrape the remaining sauce on to the sheet), spread it out in an even layer and roast until the tomatoes are juicy and blistered and the carrots are tender, 30 to 35 mins.

03. Let it cool for 5 mins, then transfer the veggies (along with the juices) to a food processor. Pulse until the mixture is mostly smooth but still a bit chunky.

TO SERVE: Spoon the mix on to seared fish, pork or cauliflower steak; toss with soba noodles (50g dry, cooked).





Charred pepper sauce

Total: **30 mins** plus cooling

Makes: **550g**

1 tbsp **olive oil**, plus more for baking sheet

4 **peppers** (2 orange, 2 yellow), quartered

1 small **onion**, sliced into ¼-inch-thick rings (don't separate the rings)

2 **garlic cloves**, unpeeled

1 tsp **brown mustard seeds**

1 tsp **ground cumin**

½ tsp **ground coriander**

2 tsp **sherry vinegar**

01. Turn on the grill and arrange an oven rack 15cm beneath it. Brush a large, rimmed baking tray with oil. Arrange the peppers cut side down and place the onion rings and garlic in the middle

of the tray. Brush the vegetables with 1 tbsp oil and sprinkle with 1 tsp each of salt and pepper. Grill until they start to char, 6 to 7 mins.

02. Reduce the grill temperature. Toss the vegetables with mustard seeds, ground cumin and coriander, then roast them until tender, about 7 to 9 mins more.

03. Let it cool, then discard the garlic skins and add the vegetables and vinegar to a food processor. Pulse until the mixture is chunky (6 to 9 pulses), scraping down the sides as needed.

TO SERVE: Spoon on to seared steak, chicken or roasted beetroot; toss with roasted potatoes or broccoli florets. **W3**

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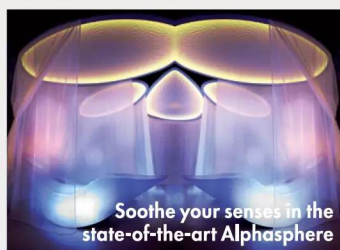
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A free way
to alleviate
trauma?

In your dreams

Lucid dreaming - the art of becoming aware that you're dreaming, enabling you to determine what happens next - may once have been the preserve of your eccentric uncle's dinner table rhapsodies. But the esoteric practice is being increasingly examined as a potential intervention for trauma. So, it's with mental wellbeing in mind that we take a closer look

WORDS: CLAUDIA CANAVAN





Jennifer is in a dark, dank room. It's sparsely furnished, save a wrought-iron bed on bare wooden floorboards. Outside, wind and rain rage, shattering a window. Water drips from the ceiling, becoming more persistent as it crashes through the timber, filling the space. As it rises, the room shakes. Through the chaos, a shadowy figure – face obscured – appears. Fear contracts her veins. 'I'm scared,' says the voice in her head – 'leave me alone.' 'We'll meet again,' comes the gentle response. So gentle, her fear becomes accented with curiosity. Jennifer wakes up with a jolt. Except she's not bundled underneath her duvet at home. She's in that sparse, rain soaked room – rattling, more violently now. 'Do you trust me?' the figure asks. At that moment, Jennifer realises she is still asleep – and has been, all along. That she is, in fact, lucid dreaming. She understands that her internal state has shifted – that she feels safe now, rather than scared. 'I trust you,' she says. Now, the figure places their hands on her shoulders, as she leans, trust-fall style, into their arms. Light surges from her pelvis to the top of her head in glinting rainbow colours spanning shimmering violet to buttercup yellow.

In a lucid dream, you become aware that you're dreaming, giving you the ability to control what occurs next as you wander through the nocturnal world. If this calls to mind Leonardo DiCaprio in the mind-bending 2010 blockbuster *Inception*, then you're on the right lines. But rather than a thief infiltrating the subconscious of his targets, Jennifer is a 38-year-old psychotherapist based in Scotland, who has learned how to disrupt her dreams to process debilitating trauma symptoms. These stem both from childhood experiences (which, she believes, meet the criteria for complex

PTSD) alongside the physical shock of acute liver failure, resulting in a life-saving transplant during the pandemic.

Her recovery included eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, accessed via the NHS. She endorses the practice for trauma, alongside the integrative psychotherapy she offers clients. But the ongoing practice of lucid dreaming, she says, allowed her to access deeper levels of trauma integration, following that sudden hospitalisation and shaky journey back to physical health. It was as if accessing a space unbound by the laws of physics via her lucid



Tapping into
your dream
state



‘It’s been an incredible doorway, allowing me to meet my trauma safely’

Strong Mind

dreams (ie, if she pushes her hand through a wall it appears on the other side) unlocked a world from which she can imagine another seemingly impossible reality – that she would regain her health.

She did, and then some: going from being unable to breathe, stand or walk unaided in the aftermath of her illness in May 2021 to getting back on her beloved bike and, via much persistence, winning two cycling gold medals at the 2023 World Transplant Games. It’s a phenomenal story. A victorious tale of hope. You might be inclined to think Jennifer’s tale is a remarkable one-off. And yet, she is one of a number of women using this historically hippie-adjacent technique to deal with parts of their brain occupied by ghosts; fragments of overwhelming memories trapped in their present reality. So, could learning to lucid dream effectively disrupt the loops that many reckoning with trauma find themselves stuck within? And is its drift from the mystical to the mainstream coming sooner than you’d expect?

Finders sleepers

In the UK, the need for accessible means to help people deal with trauma is profound. The charity PTSD UK estimates 6.5 million of us live with the condition, a cohort the NHS forecasted would gain over 230,000 people due to the pandemic, including women who gave birth alone and those who worked in emergency services. Help is available, but accessing National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-approved therapies – including EMDR – via the NHS can come with a long waiting list.

Someone with sky-high hopes that lucid dreaming can function as a drug and largely side effect-free disruptor in this space is Charlie Morley. The UK’s foremost lucid dreaming teacher – who works with a team of trained psychotherapists – he taught Jennifer the skill that has transformed her life. He learned how to lucid dream in his teens and has since published several books on the topic, including *Wake Up To Sleep, Lucid Dreaming: A Beginner’s Guide To Becoming* ➔

Strong Mind

Conscious In Your Dreams and Dreams Of Awakening.

With a view to mainstreaming the technique, he's worked on a peer-reviewed pilot study exploring its efficacy as a trauma intervention. Forty nine participants (two-thirds of whom were women) who met the (self-reported) criteria for PTSD attended a remote six-day workshop delivered by Morley, learning the skill of lucid dreaming – including how to address traumatic memories and nightmares while in a lucid state. The results were impressive: 76% had at least one lucid dream during training; 68% of which the dreamer understood (again, self-reported) to be healing. By the end, 85% of those enrolled reported such a reduction in symptoms that they were no longer classified as having PTSD; changes that persisted until a three-week follow up. It's an imperfect study. A large-scale randomised controlled trial – the gold standard of scientific research – has been completed, with the results due in spring.

'They don't compare those who felt better after lucid dreaming with those who felt better but didn't manage to lucid dream. So it's hard to know if it was lucid dreaming that made a difference as opposed to just "something",' says Neil Greenberg, a clinical psychiatry professor at King's College London and spokesperson for the Royal College of Psychiatrists. 'Also, they recruited the participants via advertising, so there was a high chance the cohort were already invested in the intervention being a success – ie, they were always susceptible.' And while we're casting a critical eye, it's important to note that the Californian Institute of Noetic Sciences – the body with which Morley carried out the study – push the boundaries of what can be considered scientific endeavour by engaging with some studies exploring psychic abilities.

Wide awake

But this story is bigger than one study. The deeper *WH* dug into the topic, the more we found advocates for lucid dreaming among those working in established mental health disciplines from clinical



She woke up,
feeling peaceful,
rather than her
default: terrified

psychology to neuroscience. As is often the case with more 'out-there' mental health modalities, we found more in the US. Kristen LaMarca is a clinical psychologist specialising in sleep and dreams who uses lucid dreaming as part of her offering. 'A lot of modalities for treating trauma ignore dreams and sleep altogether,' she says – adding why she believes this to be a complete

oversight. 'A core trauma symptom is re-experiencing memories, and nightmares play a role in that for many people. So, teaching people a way to disrupt those nightmares could potentially be a way to help.'

True to Jennifer's experience, Dr LaMarca views dreams as a stage upon which traumatic memories can be played out, safely – thanks, in no small part, to the element of control. 'Being lucid encourages you to connect with parts of yourself that represent suffering or emotional challenges, and infuse those with healing intentions,' she explains – offering the example of a former client who had nightmares related to childhood sexual abuse. In one lucid dream, she got the attacker off her, asking them to



Gain the power back over your memories

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY

give her space – at which point they dissolved. She woke feeling peaceful, rather than terrified. Three months after, the nightmares hadn't come back, affording her client peace.

When grappling with the 'how' of this story, it's natural to reach to the comparatively reassuring tangibility of neuroscience. But, as Benjamin Baird, assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at The University of Texas elucidates, that won't get us far here. Research on the neuromechanics of lucid dreaming is in its teetering infancy – largely because carrying out these investigations is so difficult. 'There's only been one case report of someone having a lucid dream under an fMRI scanner, which showed increased activity in the prefrontal cortex,' he explains. 'As such, we don't know for certain how brain activity differs from someone lucid dreaming versus someone in typical REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.' As for the brain activity of someone lucid dreaming *and* processing trauma? That's an extra hurdle for researchers to mount.

Melt yourself down

Leading health psychologist Sula Windgassen (@the_health_psychologist_) – a woman with her head in both the research and, via her clients, lived experience of female trauma – leans curious, rather than critical, when asked for her lens. The principle of reimagining such experiences to take away their power, she believes, makes sense – in theory – as a trauma treatment. 'In PTSD, your brain doesn't process the experience in the same way as it would process experiences that come with no overwhelm or distress,' she explains. 'Normal' memories are processed via the hippocampus, encoding the experience into your 'long-term drive', something you can go back and retrieve.

But with PTSD? The memory remains stuck; a shard of glass fixed in place, while the rest of your mind moves on. When triggered – by a sound, sight or smell – you relive the moment in an all-encompassing flashback; you experience the trauma – in its crushing totality – once more. Both trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy

(CBT) and EMDR, she adds, disrupt this loop by accessing the memory, thawing and timestamping it, then letting it slip into the hippocampus with the rest. Could lucid dreaming work along similar lines? Possibly. But due to research gaps, you're unlikely to access specialists via the NHS any time soon.

Free your mind

If your interest is piqued, know this comes more naturally to some than others. Experts believe regular meditation ups your chances of lucid dreaming; in Tibetan Buddhism a similar practice is known as 'dream yoga' and is used as a spiritual tool. If you're currently dealing with trauma-related mental ill health and looking to lucid dreaming for healing, a reminder that – like other alternative modalities – it should be explored as an adjunct to evidenced, NHS-recommended tactics. For PTSD, these are active monitoring (essentially seeing if your symptoms get better on their own, if you've had them for less than four weeks), trauma-focused CBT, EMDR or – in cases of persistent PTSD – a combination of talking therapies and antidepressant medications.

It's important to note that some experts caution against lucid dreaming if you're at risk of psychosis – those with history of bipolar or schizophrenia – to lessen any blur between invented and flesh-and-blood realities. Because the practice can purposefully disrupt sleep cycles, those with a sleep disorder should consult a health professional.

But for Jennifer? While scientific data robust enough to satisfy psychiatric bodies – which, rightly, needs to be as rigorous as for any treatment – is pending, she's sold. So much so that she has trained to be a lucid dreaming facilitator, to complement the psychotherapy she offers clients. She's even harnessed the technique's expansive influence to propel her own physicality (something that isn't uncommon among elite athletes) to push the boundaries of what her mind believes is possible. 'When I'm cycling up a hill and feel my lungs struggling, I use my lucid dreaming experiences of bending reality to tell myself that, actually, I can fly up that incline like an eagle.' **WB**



TRAIN YOURSELF TO LUCID DREAM IN THREE STEPS

If you're keen to break new emotional ground by playing puppet master within your own dreams, try lucid dream facilitator Morley's get-started strategies

1

Plan your dream

Decide what you want to do in your first or next lucid dream by creating a dream plan. What do you plan to do in your lucid dream and why?

Having a good reason to have a lucid dream is way more powerful than knowing how to have one.

2

Practise dream recall

Training yourself to be able to recall and remember your dreams is essential to lucid dreaming. That's because the more conscious you are of your dreams, the easier it will be to become conscious within your dreams. As you fall asleep, keep telling yourself over and over, 'Tonight, I will remember my dreams. I have excellent dream recall.'

3

Keep a dream diary

The next step is to document your dreams: keep a notebook and pen by your bed, and jot down what you can remember as soon as you wake up. The act of writing down your dreams allows you to recognise the memory of an unconscious process with your conscious awareness.



how
to
turn

rejection

into
resilience



Whether you've been turned down for a job or left off the invite list for a wedding, rejection has a special kind of sting. But it's an experience you can grow from.

Let the experts show you how

WORDS: LYDIA WANG



Rejection

Being turned
down can
have an
upside



There's an adjective that's haunted me my entire life. While it's sometimes a compliment, more often than not it's a comment on how I handle rejection, exclusion and any perceived failure. The word? Sensitive.

Growing up, I was the kid who ruminated over not getting invited to birthday parties. I turned into that teen who cried in the toilets after not being cast in the school musical. And, naturally, I became the kind of adult who had a difficult time moving on from an 'I'm not ready to be in a relationship' text or a 'We went with another candidate' email.

If any of these examples give you visceral flashbacks to your own humiliating, painful moments of rejection – first of all, I'm sorry. Second of all, there's a reason these memories sting. Just thinking about instances of social rejection (seeing a photo of someone who broke your heart, for example) can activate the same part of your brain that responds to physical pain, according to a study published in *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*. Feeling rejected hurts. Literally.

From an evolutionary perspective, rejection's harsh impact makes perfect sense: the desire to be accepted is a survival instinct. The individuals with the highest survival rates 'were the ones who were most attuned to behaving in ways that prevented other people from rejecting them', says

Mark Leary, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University in North Carolina, USA.

And yet, rejection remains an unavoidable part of life. 'People personalise it and think it's about them, when rejection really is just part of everyone's experience,' notes Gary Lewandowski Jr, a professor of psychology at Monmouth University in New Jersey, USA. There's no good way to make it hurt less, either; not when someone ghosts you after a promising second date or when you're passed over for a promotion. '[Your response to rejection] is sort of like stepping on a sharp object with your bare feet,' says Dr Leary. It's painful, but the pain is really just a sign that you're an evolved human being who doesn't want to get hurt.

That said, there are ways you can shift your mindset to ditch the cycle of rumination. Having coping tools in your arsenal can help your overall mood and mental health, too, says psychologist Leslie Becker-Phelps, author of *Bouncing Back From Rejection*. 'You'll feel more positively about yourself, and you'll be more persevering and resilient.' Ready to rethink rejection?



Spot the difference between BEING REJECTED AND FEELING REJECTED

Experiencing a familiar sense of shame? First, try to look at what happened – *really* look at it – and ask yourself if it's possible that you're just feeling sensitive. 'Neutral reactions from other people are often perceived as rejection because the neutrality indicates this person doesn't particularly value the relationship,' says Dr Leary. 'Many of the times we feel rejected, technically we weren't.' In other words, anything other than enthusiasm can be perceived as a dismissal. But playing detective can help. Ask yourself a few questions to get to the bottom of it: are you interpreting this situation properly? Is it possible the person in question was distracted? Do you simply communicate in different ways? Basically, are you really getting turned down or are you just not receiving the response you'd like? →



Train your brain to see the POSITIVE SIDE OF EVERY ENCOUNTER

Rejection can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, says Dr Lewandowski; if you're looking for it, you'll see small rejections everywhere, whether it's your office pal offering unsolicited outfit advice or your partner taking hours to respond to a text. On the flip side, if you look for signs that you're appreciated and valued, you'll start noticing those, too. As Dr Lewandowski points out, 'That same person who didn't text you back quickly enough *did* text you back.' Practise taking note of when you're accepted and included, and eventually you'll train yourself to be better at noticing the positives – then giving them the same weight as negative observations.

'If you're looking for signs
you're appreciated and

VALUED,
you'll find those, too'



X **Expand your world –** **AND YOUR IDENTITY**

Three scenarios to consider: you just received constructive criticism at work; you got dumped by someone you were dating; you devoted years to writing a novel, but it took an agent minutes to say they didn't love it. (Not to rejection-brag or anything, but I've experienced all three.) It feels as if the world just ended – maybe because that job, relationship or creative project was your world. 'Say someone is completely invested in being a medical student,' says Dr Lewandowski, offering another example. 'Their identity is so wrapped up [in their career] that when they get a bad test result, they're devastated.' For someone else with other relationships and other interests, that same result might still sting, without feeling like a threat to their identity. If any of this sounds relatable, make an effort to place more emphasis on other factors that matter to you – or even just recognise the different ways you define yourself, suggests Dr Lewandowski. Then, when you experience a rejection, 'you have plenty of other things going on'.

X **Spend time with people** **who make you feel** **LOVED AND ACCEPTED**

Sometimes, a situation might leave you feeling rejected and you won't even recognise it in the moment, says Becker-Phelps. Maybe you always have a great time when you're with your school friends, but afterwards, you notice you feel down on yourself. 'Take a moment, step back and ask, "Do I feel good about myself when I'm with these people?"' She suggests. If a person makes you feel less than positive, try talking it out – it's possible they don't realise how they're affecting you. Beyond that, focus your energy on people who appreciate you. 'Those who handle rejection well tend to have a stronger relationship network,' Dr Leary says. This is also part of the reason people can become less sensitive with age – friendships and community often feel more stable as you grow older, which means 'outside' rejections tend to hurt less.



‘Those who handle rejection well tend to have a

STRONGER

relationship network’



Think about

WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF

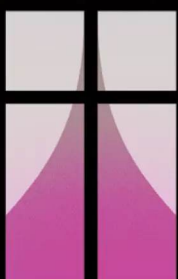
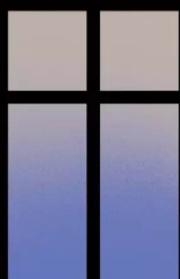
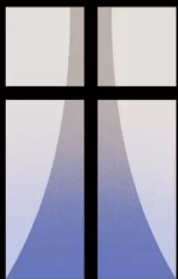
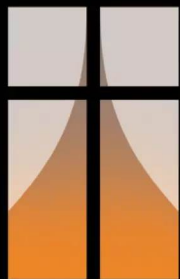
It's true that positive affirmations can elevate your self-worth. But instead of repeating that you're a good, worthy person in the hope you'll believe it someday, dig deeper and find words that feel specific to you: what unique traits make you who you are? You might notice that you perk up a little when you think about them, says Becker-Phelps. Repeat those affirmations daily; you'll start to feel more resilient and confident. In that spirit of self-love, I've come to realise my sensitivity is no bad thing; it's what makes me an empathetic and thoughtful person. But while I'm okay with being attuned to the pain of rejection, I'm ready to change how I react to it. As cheesy as it sounds, I know that every rejection has led me somewhere better.

Strong Mind



WHAT YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE SAYS ABOUT YOUR REJECTION STYLE

Some people are more sensitive to rejection (or perceived rejection) than others – and many who fall into that ‘rejection sensitivity’ bucket may also have insecure attachment styles. ‘As a child, you needed something from your caregiver and it either wasn't provided for you or was provided only in sporadic, unpredictable ways,’ says Dr Lewandowski. ‘Both of those patterns have implicit rejection in them.’ This can turn into a lifelong cycle. Some people with rejection sensitivity ‘are more likely to read rejection into even the smallest experiences’, adds Becker-Phelps. Maybe a friend didn't laugh at your joke; maybe your partner had to cancel date night; or maybe a co-worker disagreed with you. From here, you spin your own version of what's happening and a small dismissal or non-reaction becomes a big deal. If this sounds like you, the same advice for grappling with rejection applies – it just might take more focus for you to get there. **WB**



‘I experienced domestic abuse at the hands of my housemate’

For most people, ‘domestic abuse’ conjures a disturbing picture of intimate partner violence. But many of those trapped by an aggressive or controlling partner aren’t in a romantic or sexual relationship with them. Here, one woman – who’s campaigning to change the law around non-romantic domestic abuse – shares her story

We thought we'd hit the jackpot. After deciding to move to a more lively part of London to enjoy the buzz of the unlocked-down city, my friend and I found what we were looking for. Two rooms in a four-bed house, in a great area. After going for a drink with the housemates – and agreeing that they passed the vibe check – we moved in.

For six weeks, I was happy there. We'd cook meals together and go to the pub. I even started watching a series with one of the housemates, Tom*. But it wasn't long before his behaviour started to feel inappropriate.

He started to bring up sex, making comments about how I'd just been born when he lost his virginity and how he'd slept with 20 women by the time that I'd lost mine. When he told our other housemates that I'd had sex with him, I decided to confront him. Instead of apologising, he told me he had feelings for me – and tried, quite forcefully, to kiss me.

From that day, he seemed intent on making my life hell. He'd call me vile names, both to my face and to our housemates; he'd disconnect my laptop from the wifi box, forcing me to work elsewhere. When my car went missing one day, only to turn up undamaged a few days later, I knew he was behind it. But when I reported this to my landlord and the police, expressing concern for my safety, I was told nothing could be done.

Unsurprisingly, my mental health spiralled. That the cost of moving was significant meant I found myself weighing up financial security against my right to feel safe. But by constantly questioning whether I deserved to be safe, I was essentially weighing up how valuable I thought my life was – a harrowing scenario that affected my self-worth in a profound way. That I hadn't seen



Savanna McDermott, 27, is a social worker

the red flags earlier made me question my professional judgment, too. As a social worker, I was tasked with making calls on removing others from situations where domestic abuse was playing out. How could I, when I was living in one

myself? I began to think that I must be the problem; that I was too vulnerable; that I should have known better. It's taken a lot of self-reflection to realise that none of this was on me.

In the end, it was a strong sense that I was unsafe that led to the decision to leave. By then, I couldn't be in the house alone with him without having a friend or family member on loudspeaker, and I'd lie awake all night in case he came into my room; my plea to our landlord for locks on the doors had been ignored. The emotional abuse was causing me harm and I lived in fear of it turning physical. It pained me to dip into the funds I'd saved, but I had to get out.

Concerned for my friend who was still living there, I decided to file a Clare's Law request to find out more about Tom's history. Named after Clare Wood, who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2009, it gives anyone the right to request information from the police about whether their partner, or a partner of a loved one, has a history of violent or sexual crimes – as Clare's ex-boyfriend did. Under the law, police can reveal cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as any other information held that could be deemed as threatening.

My request was rejected; I was told my relationship with Tom didn't fit the criteria of an 'intimate sexual' partnership. It was a devastating blow, made all the more so when I learned that the woman who moved

in after I left had reported a rape by Tom. As I was on file complaining about his behaviour, the police asked me for a statement. It turned out that eight women had lived in those rooms between 2019 and 2021, six of whom had provided statements about Tom's behaviour. Had Clare's Law allowed for housemates to know about a history of abuse, this trauma could have been avoided.

That's why I'm campaigning for an extension to Clare's Law to include housemates. I'm working with my MP, Siobhain McDonagh, who has been pushing it to go forward, despite a Safeguarding Minister who's either cancelled or postponed multiple meetings. She doesn't see housemates as risk factors for domestic abuse – I vehemently disagree.

At university, someone I lived with smashed up my room after an argument with their girlfriend. In

a previous houseshare, I lived with someone who abused alcohol and drugs – a situation that meant we never knew what version of him was walking into the flat. Ever since I've started talking about

'I began to think that I must be the problem'

this issue, I've heard countless stories that are just like mine.

Housemates are some of the most intimate relationships we have. Yet, most of us move in with strangers – often in a state of desperation. With the cost of living crisis forcing more people into shared accommodation, I'm particularly worried about those who are vulnerable, including young people, refugees, asylum seekers and care leavers; people who are regularly placed into shared accommodation, who may not feel able to speak up about domestic abuse. Everyone deserves to know who they're living with – and everyone deserves to feel safe in their own home. **WH**



Housemate abuse: the expert view

Jayne Booth is a psychotherapeutic counsellor who specialises in domestic and sexual abuse

How can domestic abuse impact your mental health?

An abuser gains power and control gradually, leaving you unable to think for yourself and normalising the abnormal. It can take time to change the physiology of your brain again after leaving the perpetrator.

What are red flags that someone might be abusive?

Abusers can be charm personified at first: interested, attentive and kind. Red flags only show in tough situations – they'll be quick to anger or get upset when you change plans. Trust your gut if something makes you feel unsafe.

Any advice for victims of domestic abuse by a housemate?

Your safety must be the first consideration: stay with a friend, family member or a local refuge, and report it to the police if you feel you can. I also suggest changing any passwords the housemate might have access to.

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Best Body



Going

hybrid

After years of debate about the best way to exercise, a growing body of research is pointing to the benefits of doing a combination of cardio and strength training in tandem. Is it time you adopted a hybrid approach?

WORDS: BRIDIE WILKINS

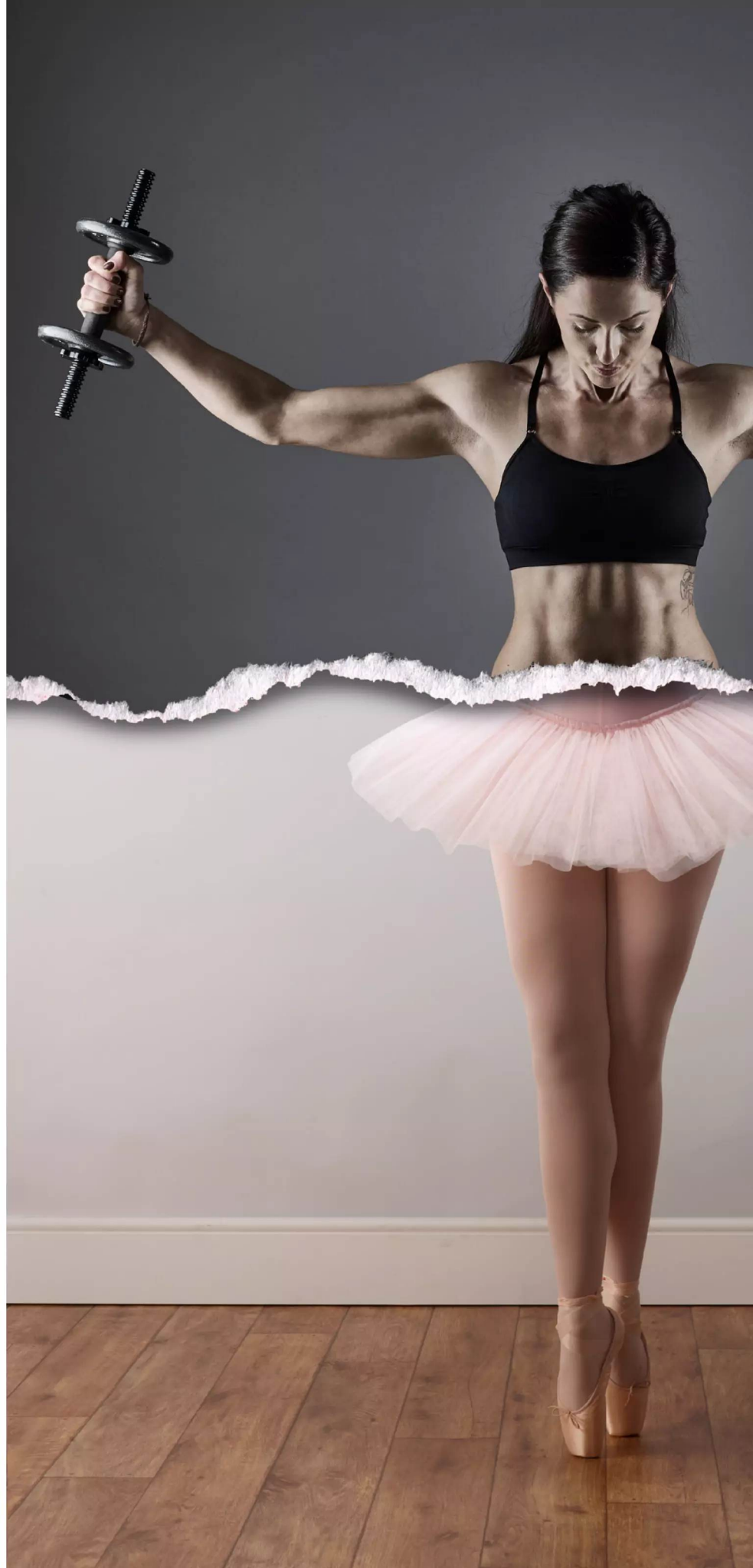




Like flattening the curve and Zooming, there was a time when the word hybrid didn't mean much. But now, four years on from one of the biggest shake-ups to white-collar working in modern history, it's one we use daily – with one in four workers now thought to be taking a hybrid approach to their working life*. So, it was only a matter of time before the word made an impact for reasons beyond the ability to attend a meeting from your sofa on a Friday.

Enter: hybrid training. 'It's an approach that combines elements of different exercise modalities and training techniques to achieve a well-rounded and balanced fitness regimen,' explains Niall Barker, head coach at Dabbs Fitness in London's Mayfair. While it tends to refer to single sessions that feature elements of both cardio and strength training, it can refer to training programmes that include both resistance and cardio on different days, too.

The concept isn't new, but it's gaining a following faster than a former Love Islander. Google





Best Body

trends data reveals searches for the term have been steadily rising since the start of 2022, peaking last October. The rise of 'hybrid athletes' might have something to do with it; the swimmer-turned-fitness coach Lucy Davis bills herself as one, while Hyrox master trainer Jade Skillen uses it as part of her official title.

And it's never been easier to try it out, either. Hyrox hosts hybrid classes at London's Third Space, The Gym Group and others to prepare people for its events, while apparel brands, such as R.A.D, are

'Combining strength and endurance training helps burn calories and build muscle'

launching cross-training shoes, built for all-round athletes.

That the approach is thriving now isn't exactly a surprise. It's the exercise equivalent of finding #balance in your life – the idea that by combining strength training and cardio, you'll be able to reap the mind-body benefits of both without pushing yourself too hard in either direction. And if fitness in 2024 had a vibe, #balance would be it. Going hard has been replaced by listening to your body, with searches for ice baths up by 300% over the past five years and 'cortisol conscious workouts' designed to keep levels of the oft-maligned stress hormone in check one of the key trends in Holland & Barrett's 2024 *Wellness Trends Report*.

Best of both

Not that the hype is all anecdotal, mind. According to one 2022 study*, researchers explored the effects of five different training styles on the cardiometabolic health (a group of common but often preventable conditions,

including stroke, diabetes and heart attacks) of overweight and obese participants. The training type that had the biggest impact on health measures was what the team termed 'combined training'. That is, a combination of CET (any continuous endurance training; eg, walking, running, cycling) and RT (any form of resistance training; free weights, weights machines, resistance bands). Coming in second was 'multicomponent exercise', which they defined as using both muscle-strengthening and dynamic cardiovascular exercises in a single session (game sports or high-intensity functional training).

So, why does strength training with a side helping of cardio deliver such potent results? The research team behind the study posits that combining the two boosts both your cardiovascular health and your muscle strength; as muscle is more metabolically active than fat, meaning you burn calories at rest, this works to improve your metabolism.

Separate research published in the *Journal Of Applied Physiology* found that combining aerobic and resistance training could decrease body fat percentage significantly more than just the latter in isolation. 'The combination of strength and endurance training helps burn calories, build muscle and improve metabolic health,' adds Barker, with the caveat that weight loss primarily depends on maintaining a caloric deficit, meaning a hybrid approach is one piece of the jigsaw that also includes a healthy, balanced diet.

Though much of the research into hybrid training relates to physical perks, there's evidence to suggest a blended approach could bring about big brain benefits, too. Last year, Asics tasked competitive gamers with completing a total of 150 minutes of medium-impact cardio and strength training per week for four months. The gamers' rankings improved by 75%, a reality that had repercussions far beyond just their reputation; they enjoyed a 10% boost to their cognitive function, a 44% increase in their →

confidence levels as well as a 33% increase in concentration; anxiety levels, meanwhile, dropped by almost half. The authors concluded that this combination of exercise could be as effective at boosting brain function as learning a second language, reading, completing a puzzle every day or playing an instrument. Wild.

If that's not enough to convince you, a few months later, Canadian researchers compared the cognitive function of participants who took part in a combination of aerobic and resistance training with those who didn't exercise at all; the exercisers enjoyed significantly improved memory and attention span, along with their executive function

Hybrid training is incredibly versatile. Adapt it to suit your fitness level

(your ability your set your mind on a task, then complete it).

Because the study* was observational, researchers can't say for certain that one factor influences the other. But it certainly chimes with what we know about the value of both types of training for brain health. Resistance training has been shown to strengthen the function and structure of your frontal lobe – responsible for things such as problem-solving, motor function and judgment; aerobic exercise, meanwhile, can increase the volume of your hippocampus, the region responsible for your memory. Doing the former has been shown to deliver more oxygenated haemoglobin to your frontal lobe, which acts as the energy needed for it to carry out its functions. As for the latter, evidence suggests that cardio could cause an increase in the secretion of BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), which

has been shown to promote neurogenesis – the production of tissue – in your hippocampus. Performing these two training types in tandem, then, is giving your brain the best of both.

Better together

Which all means... what, for your workout week? It's true that much of the research into hybrid training so far has been done on athletes; one study in the *British Journal Of Sports Medicine* showed that training across various intensities, loads and distances could bring about greater physical outputs, resilience and protection against injury. But don't take that to mean the benefits are reserved for those gunning for a place on the podium.

'[Hybrid training] is suitable for people with varying goals, including general fitness improvement, weight loss, improving athletic performance, injury rehabilitation and many more,' says Barker. That it's incredibly versatile, he adds, means you can also adapt it to suit your goals and fitness level, as well as any limitations you might have.

And that mention of adapting your workout schedule and session set-up to fit your individual goal is crucial. If hypertrophy (or muscle growth) is what you're working towards, put the focus on resistance training. Got your sights set on a 5K running PB? Consider upping your cardio sessions. The only non-negotiable? Rest. 'Start with two training sessions per week, made up of either two strength days and one conditioning (cardio) day, or two conditioning days and one strength day, depending on what your primary goal is,' Barker advises. 'This leaves you four rest days, on which you could perform 20 minutes of light cardio or another form of active recovery, such as yoga. Schedule these rest days in between each workout day to allow your muscles time to recover fully.' Basically, it's a balancing act; tip towards cardio or strength according to your goal, but always level it up with rest. Select your seven-day schedule (see right) according to your goal. Just remember, working out from home on a Friday? That's optional.



GOAL ALL-ROUND FITNESS

Monday:

Cardio

Tuesday:

Resistance

Wednesday:

Rest

Thursday:

Cardio

Friday:

Resistance

Saturday:

LISS (low-intensity steady-state cardio)

Sunday:

Rest



GOAL BUILD STRENGTH

Monday:

Resistance

Tuesday:

Rest

Wednesday:

Rest

Thursday:

Cardio

Friday:

Rest

Saturday:

Resistance

Sunday: LISS



GOAL: IMPROVE ENDURANCE

Monday:

Cardio

Tuesday:

Rest

Wednesday:

Rest

Thursday:

Resistance

Friday:

Rest

Saturday:

Cardio

Sunday:

LISS



Striking a balance

Kick-start your new training programme with these four helpful tips

Set your intentions

'Ensure you've clearly defined your goals before starting your programme,' Barker advises. Whether you want to develop strength, build muscle or get fitter, use that to get your workout week off the ground.

Separate your sessions

For newbies, Barker recommends scheduling cardio and strength workouts on alternate days, or separating them by eight hours if they're on the same day. This will help you to recover, build stamina and reduce your risk of injury.

Give endurance its place

Any longer endurance-focused cardio workouts should get its own day. 'When performing resistance training and cardio on the same day, limit cardio to around 20 minutes and focus on high intensity,' Barker says.

Keep things consistent

Try to keep a minimum of three of the same exercises in your routine for four weeks before mixing it up. That way, you'll be able to see your progress over time, and really nail good form as you're doing it. **WH**

How
I get fit
done

'I swam the English Channel – with a stoma'

When **Gill Castle** was fitted with a stoma bag after a severe childbirth injury, she was too afraid to exercise. In a remarkable turn of events, the 44-year-old went on to become the first person to swim the English Channel with a stoma, solo

I was 32 when I fell pregnant with my son. He arrived six weeks early and got stuck in my birthing canal. Doctors used forceps, which saved his life, but left me with a fourth-degree tear. This – along with a recto vaginal fistula, an opening between my rectum and vagina – was only discovered a week later, when I collapsed in the hospital corridor. I was incontinent, and fitted with a permanent stoma.

Navigating a life change like this alongside new motherhood was disorienting. My stoma bags leaked and made cripplingly embarrassing fart-like noises. That I was advised against lifting anything heavy meant I was too paranoid to hold my son. It was several months before I felt confident enough to try.

For years, the only exercise I did was walking. I remember climbing some stairs, aged 35, and becoming out of breath. I felt horrified by my lack of fitness. And when I came across an article about a triathlete with a stoma, it was the motivation I needed to take action.

That week, I signed up for a spin class. My nerves threatened to get the better of me: I thought people would be able to smell my stoma. But I made myself go, and while I only managed half of the hour-long class – free-peddalling the rest

of it – I finished feeling invigorated. From then on, I went on to spin twice a week, before introducing swimming and cycling, too. I wasn't training with a specific challenge in mind, but when I heard about an opportunity to swim the English Channel, I was intrigued. The more research I did, the more determined I became: I wanted to prove that a stoma needn't hold you back.

Still, I was in no doubt as to how challenging it would be. In total, I trained for three years, working with a professional coach and a nutritionist for the final year. My training was a combination of pool swims, sea swims and strength training, with some swim sessions lasting for seven hours. When I first signed up for the challenge, the furthest I'd swum in open water was two miles – well below the 21-mile distance, and I was terrified.

Together with my 'pilot' and 'co-pilot' – who'd be with me on

the boat – and my crew made up of friends, we left Dover. My whole body was shaking, but as soon as I touched the water, a feeling of calm descended. It was almost pitch black, but I no longer felt afraid; there wasn't a doubt in my mind that I'd make it to France.

For over 13 hours, I swam. My crew wrote messages of support on a whiteboard and fed me maltodextrin, tinned peaches and banana via a feeding pole. It was the hardest thing I've ever done, but I smiled as I swam and when we pulled into the beach, I fell on to the sand and sobbed.

In total, I raised nearly £50,000 for Chameleon Buddies; I founded the charity in 2022 to help women in the UK and Kenya who have experienced birth injuries or stoma surgery. Parts of Kenya have limited stoma supplies and are forced to use alternatives, such as crisp packets. It was a risk to do this swim with my stoma, but I did it for them. **WV**

BELOW
Channelling
good vibes:
Gill after
completing
the 21-mile
swim



Next challenge
Climbing Mount
Kilimanjaro



Go-to breakfast
Protein porridge
with Greek
yoghurt and
dark chocolate



Mindset mantra
If I can do it,
so can you

PHOTOGRAPHY:
**ELLIOT JAMES
KENNEDY**

FASHION DIRECTOR:
SASKIA QUIRKE

Girl math

Reboot your spring wardrobe by adding investment pieces to affordable athleisure for an outfit that always equals style



✕
SHIRT, £69.99,
OYSHO. SKIRT,
£40, ADIDAS
ORIGINALS.
EARRINGS, £55,
D. LOUISE

Wear Well



✗
TOP, £60; LEGGINGS,
£80, BOTH AMADA.
SMALL HOOP
EARRINGS, £55;
LARGE HOOP
EARRINGS, £60,
BOTH PANDORA.
BOOTS, £49.99,
MANGO



✗
TOP, £44.95,
NIKE. TOP (WORN
UNDERNEATH), £40,
FREE PEOPLE. SKIRT,
AROUND £266, THE
FRANKIESHOP. BELTS,
£15.99 EACH, MANGO.
SOCKS, £15 FOR A
PACK OF THREE,
LOUNGE. TRAINERS,
£199.99, NIKE AT
FOOT LOCKER

✕
COAT, £265;
SUNGLASSES, £165,
BOTH ALO YOGA.
UNITARD, £128,
HÉROS. HUGGIE
EARRINGS, £55,
ASTRID & MIYU.
HOOPEARRINGS,
£55, PANDORA.
SOCKS, £17, FALKE.
SHOES, £410,
BIRKENSTOCK
X TEKLA





✕
COAT, £792, BITE
STUDIOS AT THE
OUTNET. HOODIE,
£175, ROWING
BLAZERS. BOXERS,
£29.95, SPELTHAM.
SOCKS, £15 FOR A
PACK OF THREE,
LOUNGE. TRAINERS,
£85, ASICS AT SCHUH



✕
JACKET, £139.99,
ADIDAS ORIGINALS
AT ZALANDO. TOP,
£36; BOXERS, £34,
BOTH SKIMS.
SUNGLASSES, £85,
MESSY WEEKEND.
HOOP EARRINGS, £55,
PANDORA. SNAKE
CHAIN NECKLACE,
£85, ASTRID & MIYU.
LINK NECKLACE,
£150, PANDORA





Danger

✕
JACKET, £34.99,
H&M. BAG, £68,
FP MOVEMENT
BY FREE PEOPLE



✕
BLAZER, AROUND
£245, THE FRANKIE
SHOP. TOP, £75;
SHORTS, £65,
BOTH PANGAIA.
OBLONG HOOP
EARRINGS, £35;
HOOP EARRINGS,
£55, BOTH PANDORA.
NECKLACE, £350,
MONICA VINADER.
SOCKS, £15.99 FOR
A PACK OF THREE,
TORE. TRAINERS,
£110, NEW BALANCE



✕
PARKA, £620,
THEO. SHIRT, £135;
SHORTS, £79, BOTH
RAINS. TOP (JUST
SEEN), £115, VAARA

On the move



THE GUINEA PIG

Thérèse Hillman,
WH fashion intern

I'm no stranger to rain.

I was six when I started athletics training and a childhood spent braving the unpredictable Irish weather stood me in good stead for training outdoors. Today, I'll always opt for an outdoor run over a gym workout. Perhaps it's the bleak mid-winter, but

lately, the streets have looked less enticing. And so I started searching for kit to make my runs more sustainable. Top of the list was a durable, lightweight and, most importantly, water-resistant running bag to keep my essentials dry without compromising on my performance.

Lululemon's All Sport Backpack was the perfect fit. Not only does it have a 10-litre interior, but the strategically designed load lifters (adjustable straps that secure the pack between your shoulders and back) and compression straps (nifty leashes reducing the size of the bag around its contents for a compact feel) almost make you forget it's there. As a result, it distributes the weight of my possessions comfortably for my run. All in all, strapping into this has made my whole frame feel so much more streamlined and ready to sprint.

Previously, I'd been running with random sports bags, but investing in a tailored bag specifically made for being on the move has been the encouragement I needed to get back outside. The All Sport Backpack is made for exactly that: all sports. It hosts exterior loops to hold a hiking pole, a hidden snap pocket for a stowable hood (honestly, a game changer during downpours) and an interior water reservoir pocket and tunnel to fit your own drinking tube, giving you every reason to brave the cold and reap the rewards of year-round outdoor training.

Wear Well

Fit kit
hero



The bag's
stowable hood
is a game
changer

MICRO TREND CUSHIONED RUNNING SHOES

Foam-filled, cushioned
OTT running trainers
are the perfect way to hit
a new PB in comfort



SAVE

£99.99, Hoka
Put more spring in your step
with Hoka's budget-friendly
running shoes.



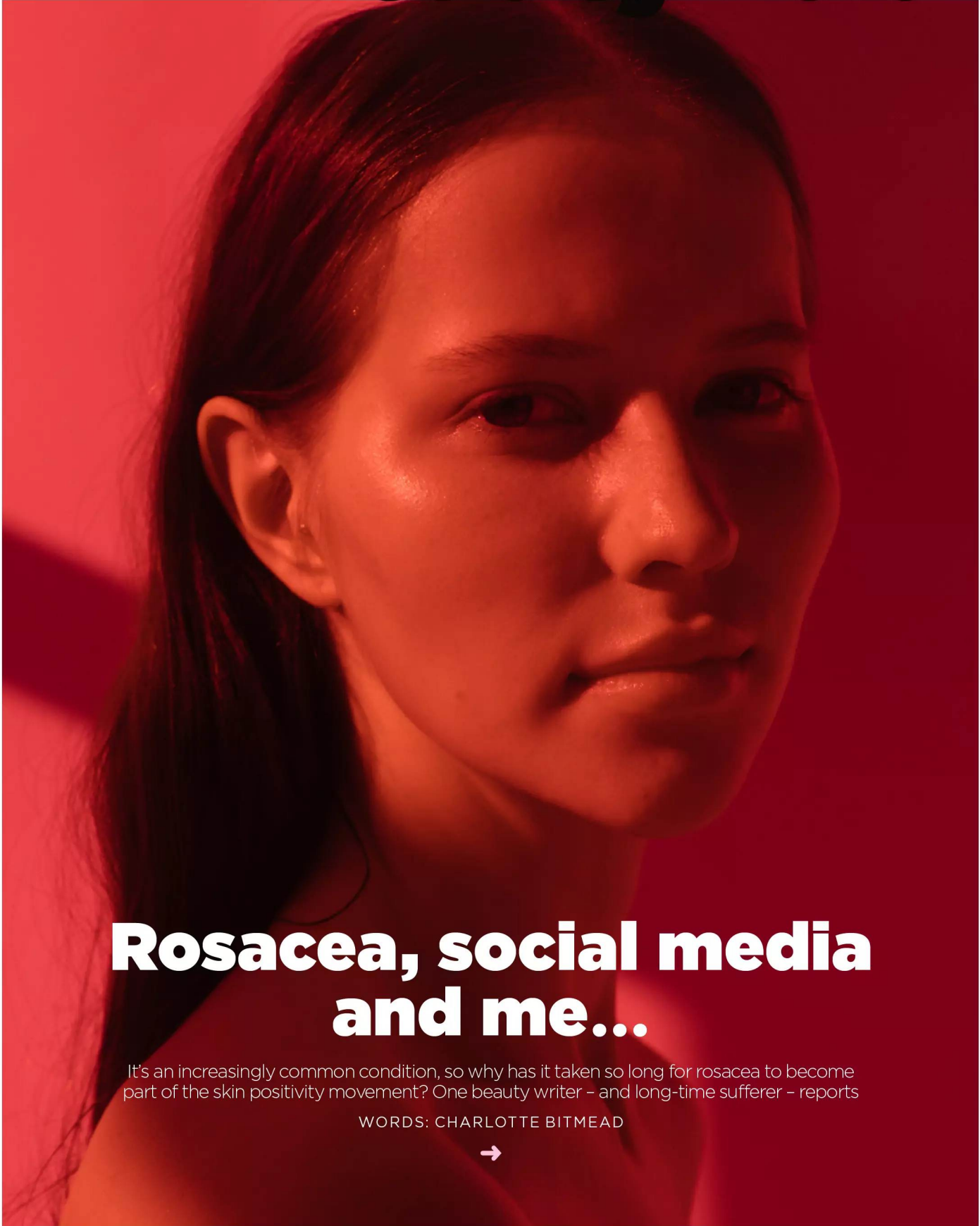
SPEND

£140, New Balance
Enjoy comfort and style with
the super cushioned midsole
of the new Fresh Foam X.



SPLURGE

£160, On
The Cloudmonster's CloudTec
sole offers the biggest
rebound sensation.



Rosacea, social media and me...

It's an increasingly common condition, so why has it taken so long for rosacea to become part of the skin positivity movement? One beauty writer - and long-time sufferer - reports

WORDS: CHARLOTTE BITMEAD

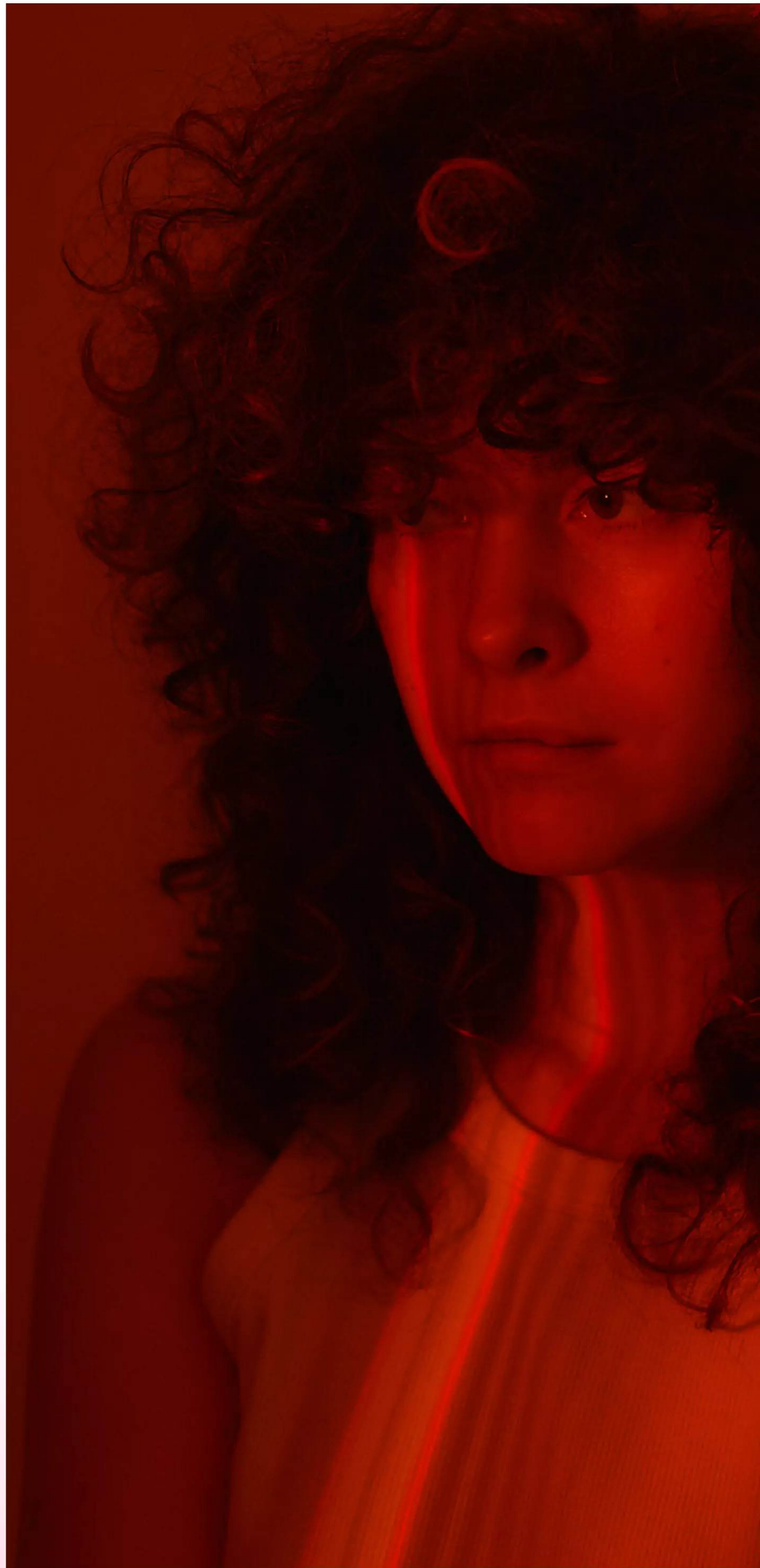




Perhaps it was albums in your local branch of HMV. Or maybe it was magazines, or bottles of nail varnish. Me? I spent my teenage pocket money on tubs of Maybelline Dream Matte Mousse. I'd cake it on to my skin to camouflage the ruddiness that had haunted my complexion for as long as I could remember. It was only in my late teens that I finally landed on a label for my condition. And I suspect that I wasn't the only one engaging in this rather costly cover-up.

When the National Rosacea Society – an American non-profit – surveyed rosacea sufferers on their self-confidence and self-esteem, almost 90% said the condition had impacted them, with more than a third revealing they'd avoided going out in public or cancelled social engagements as a result. And yet, the condition has been largely left out of the skin positivity conversation, which has been dominated by acne. Now, this appears to be changing.

The UK's top rosacea influencer, Lex Gillies (@talontedlex), likely has something to do with rosacea entering the chat. Using her 50k-strong social platform, Lex offers education on the condition she's dealt with for the past 18 years. One of her most viewed videos looks at 'the bucket theory': the idea that your body is a bucket, while each of your rosacea triggers (stress, food, weather) are drops of water. For her, each drip (or trigger) has



‘For so many years I was in denial, thinking that I could pretend my skin wasn’t in agony’

a cumulative effect, until the bucket overflows (her rosacea flares up).

Offline, researchers are leading studies around the brain-skin axis, a term used to describe how your emotions and your nervous system interact. Known as psychodermatology, it’s based on the idea that the mind-skin connection is a physiological phenomenon. While skin processes physical signals such as heat, cold and pain, the same sensory fibres can detect and react to emotional signals, too. It all adds up to a scenario in which rosacea is finally getting the attention it deserves.

Seeing red

‘Rosacea is a common chronic inflammatory disorder,’ says dermatologist Sam Bunting. In the UK, the condition affects one in every 20 people and it’s consistently the most searched for skin condition online. ‘I think of it as our skin’s overzealous defence in response to the environment and it’s something many individuals have a genetic susceptibility to.’ The reason lies in the body’s hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. Think of it as the control centre of your stress response: it will trigger the production of hormones such as cortisol when your body senses stress. ‘The skin has its own HPA system,’ adds psychodermatology specialist Alia Ahmed. ‘This means it can be doubly triggered to produce hormones that cause a local inflammatory response, delay healing and disrupt the skin barrier.’

Today, there are four different recognised versions of the skin condition. Type one is known as

(ready?) erythematotelangiectatic rosacea. ‘This is characterised by a prolonged flush and is often the first sign of the condition,’ adds Dr Bunting. Type two is the most common – as well as being marginally easier to pronounce. ‘Papulopustular rosacea gets mixed

up with acne because you see red spots (papules) and white-headed spots (pustules) typically in the centre of the face, over the cheeks nose and chin,’ she explains. Type three, phymatous rosacea, is most common in men and involves a thickening of the skin, as well as the signature redness, while type four – ocular rosacea – involves gritty, sore and red eyes, and affects up to 40% of patients. That this type of classification was never mentioned when I was diagnosed just shy of a decade ago is further proof of the pace of change.

Facing reality

Back then, my peers bonded over their shared acne horror stories, but I didn’t know anyone else with rosacea – a reality that made living with the condition all the more isolating. My red skin made it look like I was constantly embarrassed, and when boys came into the picture, everyone just assumed that I fancied the person I was talking to. But just being in a room with the heating on was enough to cause a flare-up. During one episode, aged 16, I was telling a story to a group when one girl interrupted. ‘You know you can fix that,’ she said, pointing to my cheeks.

That I felt judged by my diagnosis seems to be par for the course. Research into the psychosocial factors associated with rosacea has consistently reported the presence of anxiety, depression, decreased quality of life and feelings of stigmatisation, ➔



From top: Writer Charlotte Bitmead, influencer Lex Gillies and make-up artist Rose Gallagher

Beauty Lab

according to a report published in the *British Journal Of Dermatology*.

‘Being told at 21 that you have an incurable skin condition that affects your face is a really upsetting, isolating experience,’ says Lex, reflecting my own experience back at me. Like me, it was having no one to share her fears with that made navigating the diagnosis even harder. Feeling isolated, she went online. And while she believes social media has a lot to answer for (‘I think the anonymity it affords us has made us casual in our cruelty towards others’), it changed her experience of living with the condition for the better. ‘[Finding] skin positivity communities has been one of the best things to ever happen to me,’ she shares. ‘Filling my feeds with people who look like me, who have experienced similar things and who are sharing tips, advice or just showing support, has been transformative in my skin journey.’ Fast-forward to today and Lex is preparing to launch

condition is discussed online. ‘There’s this underlying belief that if you have rosacea, you’re doing something wrong,’ she shares. ‘You’ve had too much to drink, you’ve eaten sugary foods, you aren’t looking after your gut health.’ This guilt, she believes, can be every bit as damaging to your self-esteem as the condition itself. But misinformation can cause physical harm, too. ‘I can’t tell you how often I’ve been on a random page that’s suggested mixing up some yoghurt and egg whites...’ Unsurprisingly, this method doesn’t come dermatologist recommended.

Work in progress

One area where misinformation can cause real harm is among people of colour. While rosacea is thought to be rarer for those with darker skintones, it’s estimated that there are around 40m cases of it worldwide. The telltale signs of redness and dilated blood vessels aren’t as obvious on darker skin, which means the condition is

‘My red skin made me look like I was embarrassed’

RosaceaCon – the first rosacea community event. She tells me she wants to replicate the same supportive, knowledgeable club that she sees in the comments below her social media posts in real life. ‘I want every person to leave the event feeling informed, supported and empowered.’

Part of this same force for change is Rose Gallagher, a make-up artist whose tutorials are targeted at rosacea solutions. ‘I’ve had redness in my skin for as long as I can remember, but I didn’t even know I had rosacea,’ Rose tells me. Like me with my pots of Maybelline, Rose used make-up as a ‘crutch’ in school; her first boyfriend never saw her make-up-free. Now, her content is encouraging those with rosacea to have fun with their make-up, rather than using it as a mask. But for all the movement’s positivity, she still feels a sense of ‘hopelessness’ in the way that

often misdiagnosed. Kemi Fabusiwa is a junior doctor specialising in dermatology who educates her followers on skin health via TikTok and Instagram (@dr.fab). ‘There’s an increased knowledge and awareness of rosacea, particularly in skin of colour, which means people are better at recognising the symptoms,’ she tells me. Signs you can look for, she adds, include warmth and flushing, especially after drinking alcohol or eating spicy foods, as well as a burning or stinging sensation after applying certain products. ‘But the best way to assess whether a darker-skinned person has rosacea is to analyse their skin under natural lighting and try to assess if there’s any underlying redness.’

Historically, diagnosis has been made harder still by the lack of racially diverse images in medical



People of colour may be diagnosed incorrectly

textbooks; one study* from 2018 found that just 4.5% of images in medical textbooks at top medical schools were represented on dark skintones. Here, too, we are witnessing change. Following the viral illustration of a Black foetus in-womb by medical student and illustrator Chidiebere Ibe, there’s been a tangible shift towards better representation in medical imagery. Today, the organisation Illustrate Change is building the world’s largest library of medical illustrations of people of colour, with images designed for training purposes to improve



diagnostics. But those with rosacea can help, too, adds Dr Fabusiwa. 'For darker-skinned individuals with rosacea, it's important to share images of the clinical condition so they can be used as a reference for other people who may be experiencing it but are unaware.'

This new generation of rosacea patients are changing the narrative, and for the better. 'I've reached a point of acceptance with my skin,' Lex tells me. 'For so many years I was in denial, thinking that I could ignore my triggers and pretend my skin wasn't in agony. But as

I learned more about my skin – and rosacea in general – I realised that it was so much better to try to work with it and try to treat my flare-ups as clues to follow.' Although the risk of fake news and the internet go hand in hand, the 'we're all in this together' mentality from a group of trusted experts and people with the condition makes me feel positive about the future for those being diagnosed. Who knows, maybe if they'd been around when I was first experiencing symptoms, I'd have felt confident enough to put down the tub of Maybelline. **W3**

The just-been-diagnosed guide to **rosacea**

While the condition can't be cured, it can be managed. Here, our experts offer advice on living with it



Understand your triggers

'Alcohol, spicy foods, irritating soaps, fragranced skincare, stress and UV radiation are all triggers,' says Dr Fabusiwa. For those with dark skin, she adds, it's important to reduce irritation, as it's much more prone to post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. Keeping a trigger diary can help you begin to understand yours.



Become a label detective

Fragrance-free products, along with ingredients such as ceramides, niacinamide and azelaic acid can help support a healthy skin barrier, says Dr Bunting, with the caveat that plenty of well-known products do the opposite. 'Essential oils, physical exfoliants and chemical sunscreens can deplete barrier function and trigger sensitivity.'

And SPF is a must, adds Dr Fabusiwa. 'The sun is a major risk factor for both rosacea flare-ups and hyperpigmentation.'



Seek support

If your rosacea is having an impact on your self-esteem, first, talk to a GP. 'They can prescribe retinoids, antibiotics and other prescription-strength medication that can help,' says Dr Fabusiwa. The charity Acne and Rosacea Association UK (ARA UK) also educates aesthetic practitioners and derms on treating the condition. You can find ARA UK-accredited practitioners at arauk.co.uk.

#SKINSHELFIE



Sarah Murrell

She started a plant-based tonics and oils line in response to her sister's skin struggles during her cancer treatment. Here, Sarah Murrell reveals her go-to skin saviours



THE EXPERT
Sarah Murrell,
37, co-founder
of By Sarah

A typical day

I'm up at 7.30am and slide straight on to my yoga mat for 10 minutes of stretching to gently wake up my body and mind. If I have time, I'll go to the gym, then I'm back home by 9am for a nourishing breakfast of Greek yoghurt with berries, nuts and seeds. At my desk, the first call of the day is always with my sister and co-founder, Lauren, before either diving into meetings, podcast interviews or getting stuck into scientific research for new product development. In the afternoon, I could be preparing for an upcoming campaign shoot or a panel event. By 7.30pm, my partner is home and we cook dinner together. We'll spend the evening hearing about each other's days, then I wind down with a soothing By Sarah skincare ritual just before 10pm, ready for a blissful night's sleep.

Skincare philosophy



I saw Lauren's skin deteriorate from looking healthy and glowing to sensitive and stressed during her treatment for leukaemia. Her skin was ravaged after months of chemotherapy, total body irradiation and a stem cell transplant (I was her donor). As a result, I believe gentle skincare that soothes and strengthens your skin's natural defences is best.

Skincare non-negotiable



A plant-based facial oil. Research shows that plant compounds enhance skin barrier function, leaving your skin smoother, plumper, healthier and radiant.

Day

01

BY SARAH HERO FACIAL OIL, £34

This was the first skincare product I developed to help restore Lauren's stressed, sensitive skin, so it has a deep sentimental value. It's also brilliant at giving an instant glow – I can't imagine going a day without using it.

02

BY SARAH MAVEN DAILY MOISTURISER, £36

This is our first ever moisturiser and the best I've ever used. Harnessing the power of vitamins C and E, natural plant oils and prebiotics, Maven instantly hydrates. I love how it leaves my skin looking radiant.

03

GREEN PEOPLE SCENT-FREE SHOWER GEL, £16

Packed with soothing organic aloe vera, this SLS-free wash is gentle on sensitive skin but still works wonders at cleansing and softening it.

Night

04

BY SARAH CREAM CLEANSER, £39

I love our soothing and very luxurious Balancer Cream Cleanser. It whisks away daily impurities and make-up without stripping the skin and leaves my face feeling clean, clear and moisturised.

05

THE LAST OBJECT LAST ROUNDS, £13

After a day wearing SPF and make-up travelling around the city, these reusable make-up remover pads are the perfect companion to our Balancer Cream Cleanser. Plus, each one is compostable.

06

KURE BAZAAR ROSE LIP AND NAIL BALM, £32

A recent discovery, this multitasking gem contains shea butter and olive oil to help nourish, hydrate and soften lips and cuticles.

Signature scent

07

FLORAL STREET LONDON POPPY EAU DE PARFUM, £68

I'm a big fan of this fellow British brand that shares our values of developing products with sustainability in mind. With notes of neroli, lemon and orange blossom, the scent feels elegant and timeless.

Mood-boosting make-up

08

ILIA LIMITLESS LASH MASCARA, £28

This is a real make-up hero. A quick swipe through my lashes lasts all day. The natural formula means it's kind to sensitive eyes, too.

09

JONES ROAD LOVE MIRACLE BALM, £13

This adds a pop of colour for a no-make-up make-up look. Both my sister and I received a bundle of JR products from Bobbi Brown when she launched this line – she's such an inspiration to us.

10

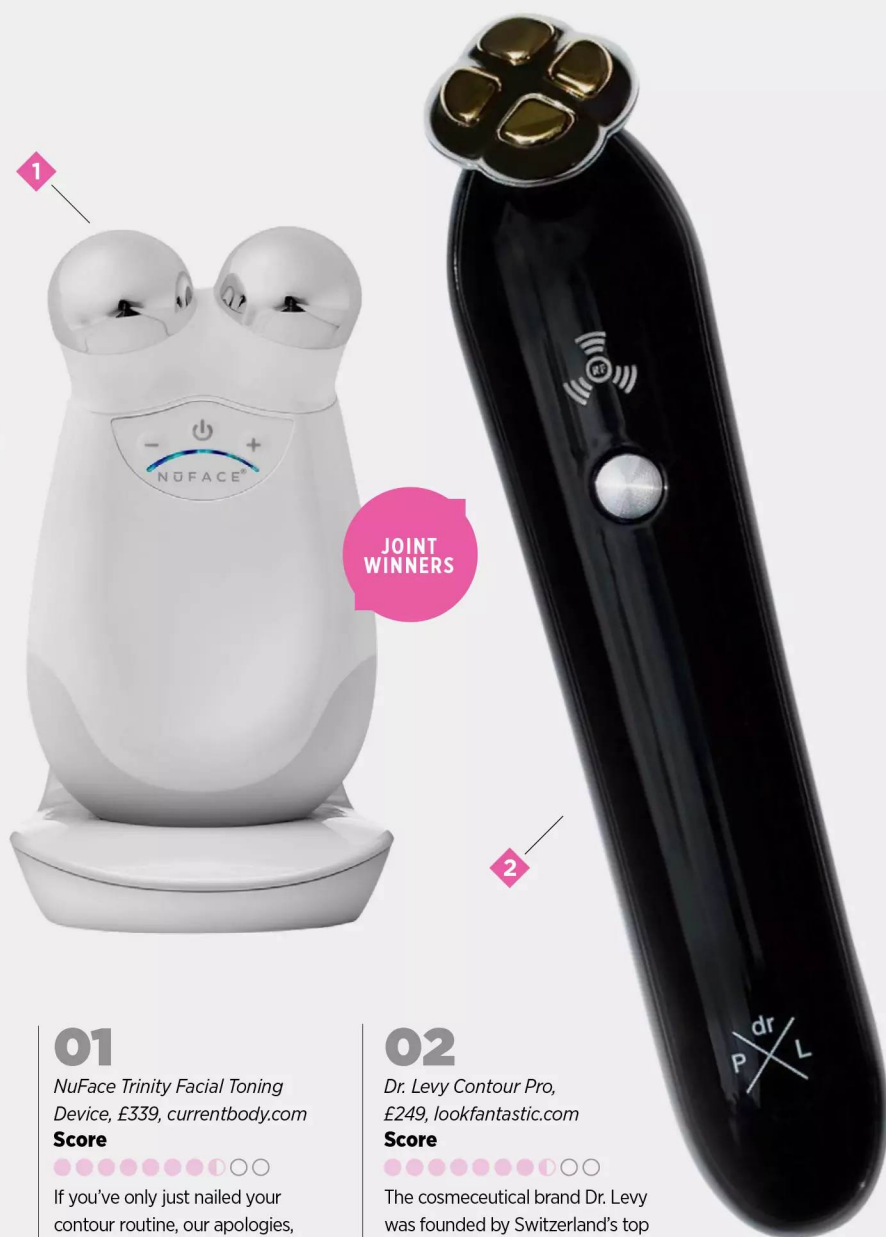
RMS LIPSTICK, £32

When I have a big meeting in the calendar, I love to pop on a bold lip colour. Plus, this formula is vegan and cruelty-free, too. **WHI**

Facial toning devices

They promise to lift and tone from home, but can we take their claims at face value? We submitted a range of microcurrent devices to the *WH* Lab to find out which products warrant the buzz

For a treatment with ‘current’ in the name, microcurrent has actually been around for a while. First used in the 1980s for facial paralysis conditions such as Bell’s palsy, microcurrent technology evolved into a cosmetic procedure in the 1990s. Fast-forward to today and you can also enjoy this treatment from the comfort of your sofa – with devices promising to smooth out fine lines and deliver a lifted appearance. But how? ‘Microcurrent devices work by transmitting a small electrical current through the skin,’ says Sophie Shotter, an aesthetic doctor who runs Illuminate Skin Clinic in London and Kent. ‘The claim is that this stimulates facial muscle contraction, creating a temporary tightening and lift.’ ‘Claim’, because robust data is scant. But one explanation, she offers, is that an increase in local blood circulation helps to deliver more oxygen and micronutrients to the skin, helping it to appear brighter. To see if these tools live up to the hype, we asked our panel to test them at home, while our experts examined their impact in the lab.



01

NuFace Trinity Facial Toning Device, £339, currentbody.com

Score



If you’ve only just nailed your contour routine, our apologies, but the ‘one dot’ technique may have been rendered redundant with this nifty bit of kit. Everyone who tried this device said their face felt more toned and their skin looked more lifted after the trial period, with testers’ cheekbones and jawlines garnering the vast majority of the praise.

The *WH* Lab verdict: This one doesn’t come cheap. We also found the accompanying gel a bit sticky. But with its ergonomic design, the NuFace was a hit overall.

Key specifications

Type of current: Microcurrent

No. of settings: 5

Treatment time: 5 minutes

Included: NuFace Trinity device, gel, charging cradle

02

Dr. Levy Contour Pro, £249, lookfantastic.com

Score



The cosmeceutical brand Dr. Levy was founded by Switzerland’s top aesthetics doctor. His mission? To combine tech and dermatology for potent results. Our panel told us their skin felt firmer and tighter after a session with this device, while the gentle buzz and warming effect made for a cortisol-calming experience.

The *WH* Lab verdict: Compact size and long-lasting battery life make this device an ideal travel companion. It’s also much more affordable than many other models on the market.

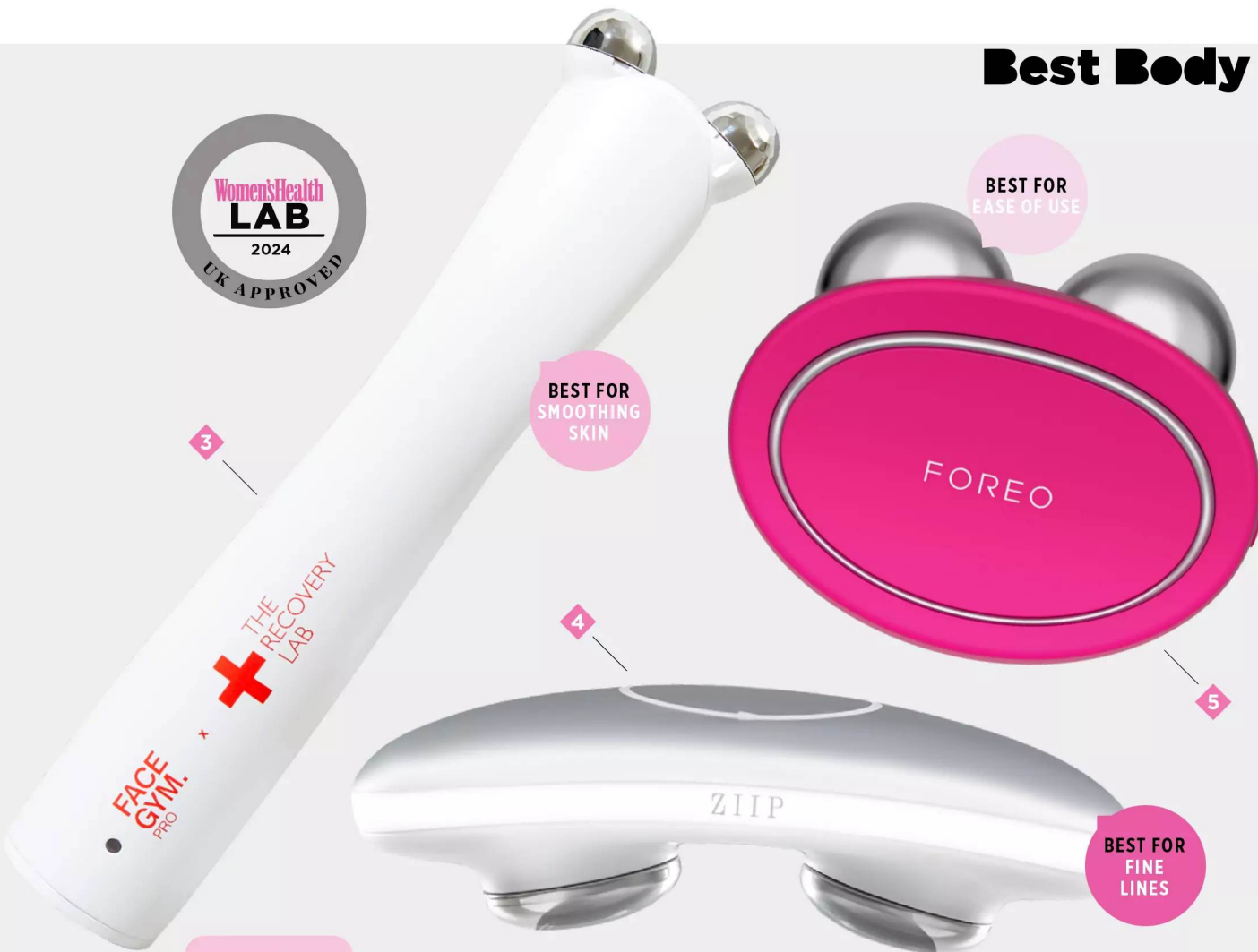
Key specifications

Type of current: Microcurrent

No. of settings: 3

Treatment time: 10 minutes

Included: Dr. Levy Contour Pro device



HOW WE TEST

We asked a panel of testers to try a selection of facial toning devices for two weeks. They gave detailed feedback on how well the products delivered on a 'lifted' result, assessing any immediate reduction in fine lines and changes in elasticity, as well as overall appearance. Then, back in the lab, we used our VISIA image analysis machine to monitor any improvement in fine lines and wrinkles immediately after use and then once more, four hours after treatment.

03

FaceGym Pro EMS Facial Device, £575, currentbody.com

Score



If it's good enough for prepping celebs for the Oscars then it's worth testing out on our panel. Some found the higher setting on this one a bit intense, but others loved that it felt like an at-home facial. It was a top scorer for smoothing skin – the VISIA showed more even complexions after just 10 minutes – and everyone found it easy to use.

The WH Lab verdict: This one definitely falls into the 'investment' category. But if smooth skin is the MO, then try the FaceGym Pro (truly, very sorry).

Key specifications

Type of current: Low, medium and high frequencies (nanocurrent and microcurrent)

No. of settings: 10

Treatment time: 10 minutes

Included: FaceGym device, serum

04

Ziip Halo, £379, currentbody.com

Score



For a compact device, this one is punching well above its weight. It scored almost full marks for minimising the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles around the eyes and forehead straight away, and nearly all of our testers agreed that both were far less visible following treatment. This may be down to its dual nanocurrent (more surface level, but with longer-term benefits) and microcurrent tech.

The WH Lab verdict: Treatment using this smoothing tool will fit into the busiest of schedules.

Key specifications

Type of current: Microcurrent and nanocurrent

No. of settings: 1

Treatment time: 4 minutes

Included: Ziip Halo device, gel, charging cable

05

Foreo Bear Facial Toning Device, £319, currentbody.com

Score



Claiming to visibly improve the premature signs of ageing by gently energising and firming the (69!) muscles in your face and neck, this gadget had a lot to prove. Our panel pored over the app and the handy facial workout routines provided for users to follow; they enjoyed using the accompanying serum, too.

The WH Lab verdict: As well as being easy to use, most testers told us they noticed fewer fine lines by the end of the trial period. All in all, it's a hard-working all-rounder.

Key specifications

Type of current: Microcurrent

No. of settings: 5

Treatment time: 5 minutes

Included: Foreo Bear device, charging cable, device stand, travel pouch, sample serum **WH**



When your hair disappears on you

Whether your parting has recently become more noticeable, your ponytail is feeling lighter or you're suddenly seeing clumps in the shower drain, there's no need to panic. We talk to dermatologists to break down what could be behind it all – and offer solutions



Words: Melanie Rud



If you're dealing with hair loss, take heart in knowing that you're far from alone.

It's thought that about half of all women will experience hair thinning at some point in their lives. That means there's a good chance you'll face the condition eventually (if you haven't already). But understanding how common hair loss is doesn't change the fact that it takes an emotional toll. Fixes are out there, but it's a complicated condition that requires time and patience to diagnose and treat. With that in mind, we consulted top medics specialising in scalp and hair health to learn what causes hair loss, how best to treat it and whether it can be prevented. Let's relieve some tress stress.

How much hair loss is normal?

First up, know that some shedding is a normal part of a healthy hair-growth cycle. 'Everyone sheds around 100 hairs per day,' says Anabel Kingsley, consultant trichologist (essentially, a doctor of the hair and scalp) and brand president at Philip Kingsley. But rather than getting hung up on a specific number, pay attention to your typical baseline. 'If you see a fluctuation where you are shedding too much hair – or many more hairs than what you consider to be your "normal", then

this usually indicates an internal disturbance or imbalance.' When seeking professional help, New York-based dermatologist Michele Green suggests collecting all the hair you find in a day and bringing it to your appointment for evaluation. (It's worth noting that all the experts we spoke with for this piece underscore the importance of seeking medical attention if you're worried about hair loss.) Your GP can run blood tests, rule out underlying medical issues and ultimately make sure you have a correct diagnosis before moving forwards with a treatment.

Certain forms of hair loss are associated with depression and anxiety, according to research

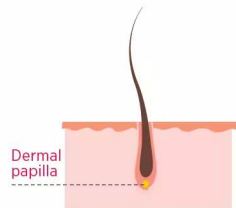
The four phases of hair growth

Each strand undergoes a years-long process of growth and rest before it ends up down the drain



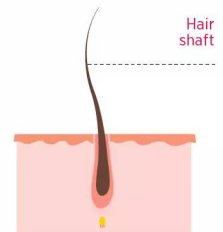
Anagen

Your follicle is growing a hair – and will do so until that strand reaches the end of this phase, which can last years.



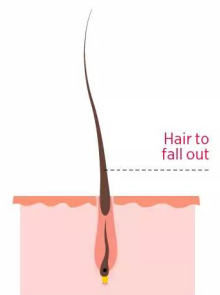
Catagen

A transitional phase spanning about 10 days when hair separates from the follicle but remains in place.



Telogen

The hair stops growing and may or may not fall out, and a new hair is beginning to form in the follicle.



Exogen

During this phase, the hair falls out. It's typical to lose up to 100 of your hairs in this phase every day.



What causes hair loss?

The list is lengthy and complicated, but these are four of the most common culprits, according to experts

Female-pattern hair loss

Also known as androgenetic alopecia, female-pattern hair loss (FPHL) will affect 40% of women by the age of 50, according to research – and can cause considerable distress. ‘This is the most common hair loss we see,’ says Kingsley, of progressive hair thinning, characterised by a widening parting, more visible scalp and, sometimes, recession around the hairline in the shape of an M. While age and genetics play a role, hormonal shifts are the biggie. ‘Your levels of androgens [male hormones such as testosterone] tend to increase around menopause and are converted into DHT, a hormone that targets the follicles,’ says Paradi Mirmirani, a dermatologist with Kaiser Permanente in San Francisco, who specialises in hair disorders. ‘This alters the hair cycle, shortening the growth phase, and makes the diameter of the hair smaller.’ While FPHL often shows up as you get older, it can happen at any time, particularly if you have a genetic predisposition. Most FPHL patients are postmenopausal, but Dr Green has seen it in women in their twenties, too.

Telogen effluvium

Defined by a sudden, dramatic shedding, this condition typically occurs about three months after a stressful event, such as heartbreak, surgery or extreme illness, says Dr Green. The reason is unclear, but it’s suspected that high levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, shorten the growth phase, causing more hair to shed, she explains. One common example is postpartum hair loss, when women notice thinning after giving birth (a stressor that’s both emotional and physical). The good news? It’s temporary and will resolve on its own. If no other factors are at play (a nutritional deficiency, for example) and the stress isn’t chronic, your growth cycle will eventually normalise.

Alopecia areata

This occurs when ‘your immune system sends the wrong signal and attacks the hair follicle’, says Dr Mirmirani. ‘We don’t know exactly why it occurs, but genetics likely plays a role.’ On the upside, when the follicles are under attack, they go into hibernation mode but aren’t permanently damaged, meaning your hair can grow back. When or how this happens is up in the air, though. ‘The only thing predictable about alopecia areata is that it’s unpredictable,’ says Melissa Piliang, a dermatologist at the Cleveland Clinic. The condition can come and go, seemingly without reason, manifesting as smooth, bald areas in coin-sized patches on either the scalp or body. Sufferers tend to notice big clumps of hair falling out at once.

Traction alopecia

Constant tension or strain on the hair damages the follicle, affecting the ability of blood and nutrients to reach it, and can result in this type of hair loss, says Dr Mirmirani. Common culprits are hairstyles such as tight braids, ponytails or extensions. Sporting an updo for one event won’t be problematic; cumulative damage is the real issue. It often appears as thinning on the edges of the scalp or bald patches in areas where there’s repeatedly a clip or a roller. A telltale sign is scalp tenderness. If you feel it, just change your style. ‘It’s like wearing high heels that hurt your feet – if you ignore that pain and keep wearing them, you’ll ultimately develop a bunion.’

Do-today tools to manage hair loss



You can’t do much to change your genetics, age or hormones, but things aren’t entirely out of your control



Switch up your style

When it comes to traction alopecia specifically, simply changing your hairstyle so that you’re not putting too much tension on your roots can be hugely helpful, says Dr Mirmirani.

It’s also worth noting that consistent chemical damage by dyes, perms or relaxers can compromise hair, making it susceptible to damage from tight styles.



Shampoo regularly

Oil, dirt and pollutants can clog hair follicles and affect growth, says Dr Piliang. So make sure you’re cleansing regularly with a gentle shampoo. *WH* loves L’Oréal Paris Elvive Hydra Pure 72h Purifying Shampoo (£7).



Take care of yourself

What’s good for your overall wellbeing is good for your hair, too. ‘Exercising and managing stress ensures you have the best hair possible and may help neutralise any genetic predispositions,’ says Dr Piliang.



Consider nutrition

Certain deficiencies (specifically vitamin D, iron and zinc) can play a role in hair loss, says Dr Green, though they’re unlikely to be the sole cause.

Still, go for a blood test, eat balanced meals and take a multivitamin.



If your scalp hurts,
that's a great indicator
that it's time to take
a break from braids
or extensions



Treatments that truly work

While it's always best to see a GP in the first instance if you're worried about hair loss, there are steps you can take to manage it on your own

At home...

Topical minoxidil

This over-the-counter medication treats hair loss that runs in your family. It's not clear how it works, but 'we do know it's a vasodilator because it was originally given as an oral medication to treat high blood pressure, and hair growth was a side effect', says Dr Green, noting that increased blood flow to the follicle may be at play. It's available topically without a prescription in 2% and 5% concentrations (the latter usually only recommended for men). It's not suitable for everyone, so speak with a pharmacist – or seek expert guidance from a trichologist. Employ patience and consistency – if you stop using it, new growth stops, too.

Laser devices

Most of the at-home devices rely on red light, and there is some data indicating that they can help with FPHL. It's not known why, but one theory is that they combat the oxidative stress that plays a role in the condition, says Dr Piliang. (Just as we know free radical damage is no good for your skin, it doesn't do your scalp any favours either.) Light devices are usually safe but can be expensive, and research suggests they work better paired with topical minoxidil. Use yours every other day for 30 minutes.

Supplements

Again, start with a multivitamin. 'My biggest issue with hair-specific supplements is that they're pricey,' says Dr Mirmirani. 'There's likely no harm in taking them, but you'll also probably do fine with an over-the-counter multivitamin.' If after six months you don't see a difference – and you have the money to spend – consider moving on to something more expensive. One to try is Nutrafol Women. Dr Green was sceptical about the hype surrounding this until she started taking it – and was impressed with the results. 'I do think there's a place for it for most patients. It's good for overall hair follicle health, which is important for any type of hair loss,' she says. Just keep in mind: it's not cheap, takes three to six months to show results and requires you to take four pills daily.

Anti-dandruff shampoo

Just because you can't see any white flakes doesn't mean you don't have dandruff. A shampoo like this puts inflammation and yeast in check, which may keep hair loss at bay. In one study* (albeit on men), those with male-pattern baldness had improved hair growth after using an anti-dandruff shampoo.



Products to try at home

Pick up one (or several) of these to keep your locks lush



Love on top

This solution, containing 2% minoxidil, is a great starting point.

Regaine Women's 2% Minoxidil Scalp Solution, £25.95



Bright idea

Research shows that laser light can reverse hair loss. Run this comb through your hair three times a week for eight minutes to get results.

Hairmax Ultima 12 Lasercomb, £374.95



Flake fighter

Created by a team of leading trichologists, this dandruff eradicating tonic helps quell inflammation thanks to camphor, while piroctone olamine fights fungus and bacteria.

Philip Kingsley Flaky/Itchy Anti-Dandruff Scalp Toner, £24



Long story

Want hair that grows fast? Some people (and doctors) swear by this blend of vitamins, zinc, biotin, marine protein and more.

Viviscal Hair Growth Vitamins For Women, £56.99



Beauty Lab

See a specialist trichologist or dermatologist to get to the root of the issue – they can run blood tests and check your medical history

PRP injections and microneedling

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is often talked about in skincare, but it can be good for the scalp, too. 'The idea here is that the growth factors in the PRP help stimulate hair sprouting,' says Dr Green. It can either be injected into the scalp or delivered via microneedling, a treatment during which thousands of tiny needles create minuscule holes in the skin. (The theory is that the micro-injuries trigger a wound-healing response that can also help hair regrowth, says Dr Mirmirani.) Dr Green typically treats patients with four monthly PRP treatments followed by yearly or biyearly injections, depending on results. Still, this is best used as an add-on to oral medication or topical minoxidil. 'I'll always start with minoxidil, plus a good oral medical regimen, then add this in as an adjunct treatment,' says Dr Mirmirani.

Hair transplant surgery

It's the most permanent solution, but it's not as straightforward as it may seem, or as it can be for men. For one, you need to have enough donor hair. 'Men typically only have thinning on top and denser hair in the back, so they have more strands that can be transplanted,' says Dr Piliang. Women, however, often experience thinning all over, so there's typically less hair to harvest, she says. For the right candidate who has severe enough thinning to warrant a transplant and enough thick donor hair to move, it can be a great option. **WH**

With a doctor... Oral treatments

Unlike topical minoxidil, the oral version is only available on prescription as a treatment for high blood pressure, although it is prescribed off-label – when a medicine is prescribed for use in a different way to that stated on its licence – at private clinics. Finasteride is another off-label

option; it blocks an enzyme that's necessary to convert testosterone into DHT, says Dr Green. (Increased DHT is linked to FPHL). Finasteride can only be prescribed at private clinics and isn't recommended for women, with it only being prescribed by a specialist doctor in rare cases. Other options are available, and always consult a doctor.

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAILEY REBECCA ROBERTS; STOCKSY. *SOURCE: LASERS IN MEDICAL SCIENCE, BRITISH JOURNAL OF DERMATOLOGY

THE BOTTOM LINE Hair loss is complicated, with no shortage of causes and potential factors at play. Part one of your plan is to figure out what's behind your shedding – nine times out of 10, that involves seeing a specialist doctor. Once that's figured out, they'll help you determine the most effective treatment path to take. But remember: you have options.



The promises and pitfalls of other people's health habits



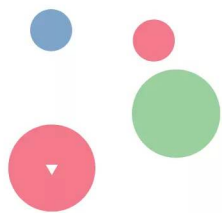
Whether yours is a 'Huberman Husband' or an 'Almond Mom', it's become commonplace to eye-roll at archetypal adherents to rigid, rules-based health routines. But what is the enduring appeal of painstakingly prescriptive protocols? And how can you protect your own health values when loved ones push theirs?

WORDS: GEMMA ASKHAM





Out of control



If TikTok is the wellness water cooler around which we all gather, there are two influencers hydrating us with hashtags. The first is a 48-year-old neuroscientist, whose rigorous – if eyebrow-raising – schedule features an 11-minute dip in icy water and a 90- to 120-minute wait for morning caffeine. A multi-hyphenate Stanford School of Medicine professor, with a biohacking vernacular that gets men going (they're not 'rules', but 'protocols'), Andrew Huberman is the modern bloke's bromance. Once seduced, it's a very slippery slope to becoming a #HubermanHusband – the tongue-in-cheek hashtag where Wags of Huberman devotees share details about the bizarre health habits their partners attempt to inflict on them.

The second influencer? Well, it's your mother. Or anyone in your life who worships at the altar of diet culture and preaches their belief that thinness is godliness. The #AlmondMom archetype entered the chat after a historic clip from *The Real Housewives Of Beverly Hills* resurfaced. In it, Yolanda Hadid tells her then-teenage daughter Gigi to eat 'a couple of almonds' when she admits to feeling faint. Yolanda's since defended the comments, telling *People* magazine they were taken out of context. But that hasn't stopped the hashtag from racking up millions of views, with TikTokers using it to communicate inherited feelings that run the gamut from fatphobia to disordered eating. On paper, these two hashtags have little in common; what binds these wellness archetypes like mouth tape to a troubled sleeper is a rules-based approach to health, one that can be copied and pasted.

Follow my lead

While a mother's meddling is unlikely to require an explanation, for those unfamiliar with Huberman, it's his staggeringly popular podcast *Huberman Lab* that's to blame for men behaving strangely. Examples include replacing a road-trip playlist of 90s bangers with a three-hour recording on sleep hygiene; introducing red light bulbs and mouth tape into the bedroom in pursuit of deeper sleep rather than spicy sex; and asking if the bartender can make an AG1 – the signature juice from the podcast's sponsor, Athletic Greens, that just so happens to be Huberman's tippie of choice. While his listenership has a roughly equal gender split, that Huberman's 4.65 million YouTube subscribers skew male has lent him the moniker 'Goop for guys'. A smartly timed launch in January 2021, just as the world slouched its tracksuit bottoms out of

lockdowns, combined with clickbait-y lingo such as 'optimisation' and concrete instructions (enter your email at Hubermanlab.com to receive a blueprint of Huberman's schedule) gave directions to a demographic wanting to embark on a wellbeing journey, while lacking a captain.

'Putting routines in place has a really big following right now,' observes Calum Sharma, head of exercise science at fitness platform The Body Lab and a Huberman follower (though, he insists, not to the point of being a Huberman Husband). He traced the trend back to the pandemic, which rattled people's faith in their health and erased all semblance of routine. As a result, Sharma has seen prescriptive practices pique people's curiosity – offering a kind of aural hand-holding into healthy living. TikTok's 'What I eat in a day' videos (#fulldayofeating) have racked up almost 2bn views; there's the unrelenting march of the five-to-nine routine (how you spend the hours between finishing work and going to bed); and how C-suite types spend their mornings is a publishing genre in its own right. And amid a digital world of wellness (mis)information, Huberman stands out as someone you'd hedge your health bets on. 'Huberman's skill is breaking down scientific literature into bite-sized pieces,' adds Sharma. 'He makes it very easy for us to copy things designed to better ourselves. Of course, critics will critique. They'll point to the premium subscribers paying \$100 a year for the privilege of submitting a question to Huberman's 'Ask Me Anything' (as if three-hour podcast episodes weren't thorough enough). And those swallowing (and coughing up for) the numerous supplements sprinkled throughout Huberman's routine, from tongkat ali for testosterone to a raft of cognitive support acts (Alpha-GPC for cognitive function, L-tyrosine for concentration and phenylethylamine for dopamine). That some supp brands also sponsor the show adds to the online derision. But Huberman's fans can't get enough. More than

5 million people follow along on Instagram, a subreddit has more than 100,000 members, while his debut book, *See, Breathe, Move*, will be a bankable stocking filler for the wellness-curious males in your life when it launches in late 2024.

Such devotion breeds two types of Huberman supporter, Sharma tells *WH*: followers and preachers. 'Followers take in his information, process it and apply small pieces to their lives. Preachers are those who've found the biggest lifestyle change from Huberman's content and want to tell people about it – sometimes to an overbearing extent,' he says, likening it to a restaurant review. Go for a bang average meal and you're unlikely to deem the experience worthy of a yarn; go to an amazing restaurant and not only are you going back, you're telling everyone you know. 'Because Huberman details things that can have a profound affect on health, such as sleep, he has that ability to create preachers,' Sharma adds. 'But this can become problematic when you've got one person in a relationship who really buys into it and the other who really doesn't.'

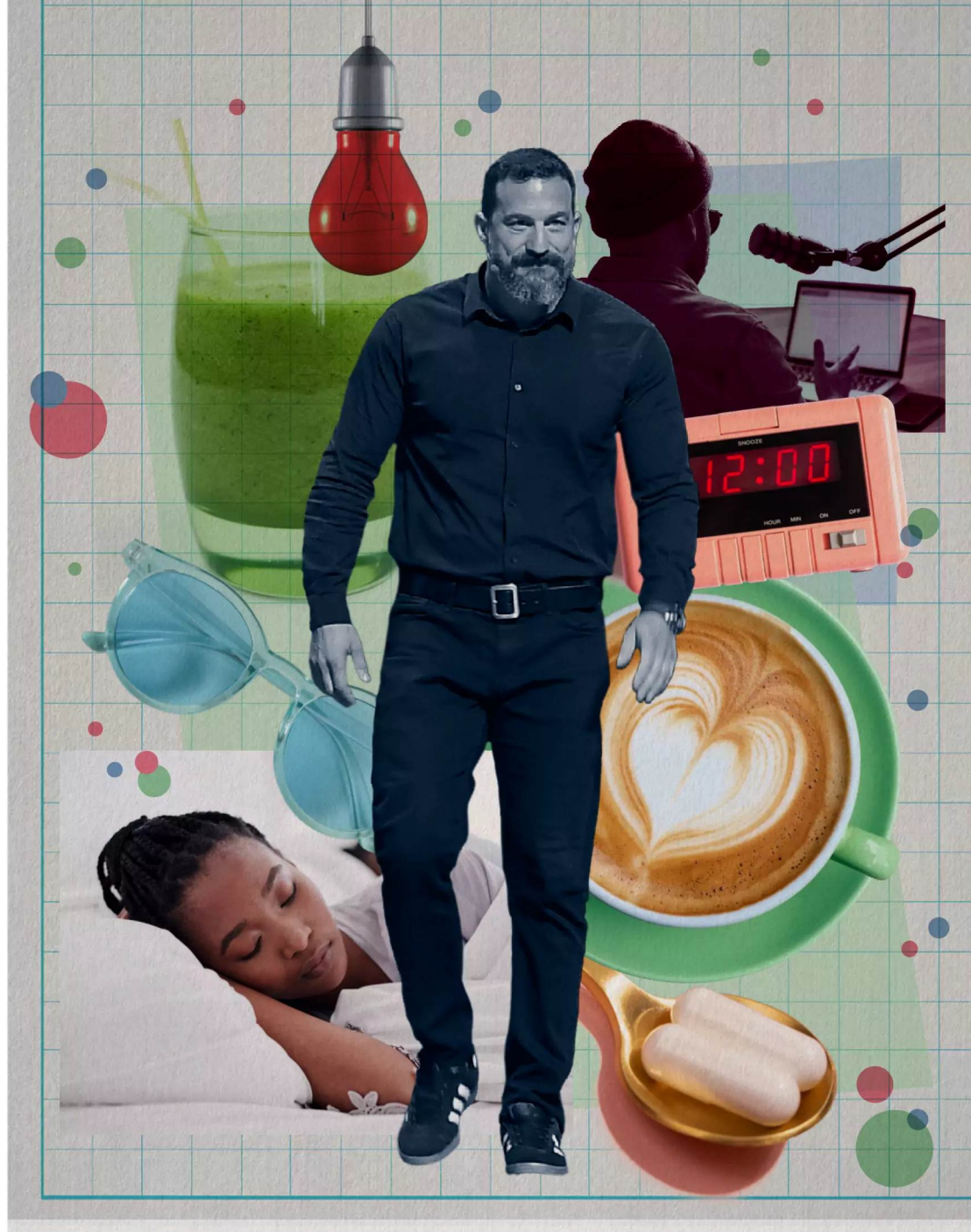
Creature of habit

Cue the health-conscious #HubermanHusband. The term went viral when TikTok user Sierra Campbell posted a video detailing the lengthy list of habits her Huberman-obsessed partner makes her do, from wearing mouth tape and blue-light-blocking glasses to waiting 90 minutes to drink her morning coffee in order to swerve an afternoon slump. 'I don't know which is worse, having an Almond Mom or a Huberman Husband?' she joked. 'The case for the Huberman Husband being worse is that not only do I have to live with him my whole life, I'm also going to live forever.' The thousands of comments on the post ranged from hard relates to commiserating. Some women admitted *they*

'I don't know which is worse, having an Almond Mom or a Huberman Husband?'

were the Huberman Husband in their relationship, while others lusted after a Huberman of their own.

Tap your networks and it's likely a similarly mixed bag. One woman in her forties sang the praises of her Huberman Husband to *WH* after he persuaded her to follow strict morning and evening routines (such as going outside in sunlight immediately after waking) to fill the void in her schedule after their dog died last year. The changes gave her so much purpose that she calls their home a 'Huberman Household'. Another in her thirties told us she's irritated by her boyfriend's →



Huberman-initiated mansplaining. 'It's like he's listened to 10 podcasts and now has a medical doctorate via osmosis,' she vents. 'Some common-sense things, such as the benefit of a consistent bedtime, I've been telling him for years, but he wasn't interested. Now he's banging on about sleep hygiene and protein like he's discovered the meaning of life.'

Science seconds the idea that exposure to a loved one's health routine can go either way. When researchers examined existing literature for a 2023 study* on the impact of starting a muscle-strengthening regime on a person's partner, they found that an active spouse encourages their loved one to up their physical activity level, too – a finding they put down to enhancing self-efficacy (a person's belief in their abilities) and self-regulation (essentially, having a fitness plan). So far, no couples counselling needed. The caveat being that routines are most harmonious when partners share a vision of how health and fitness should feature in their lives. When that's off-kilter, the relationship also veered off. The study's own research discovered that if one partner had a strict fitness regime, it often sacrificed relationship quality for the other, as couple time got booted to the periphery. Though it was attempting to control a partner's health routine to the point where it threatened their autonomy that caused serious fallout.

It's a behaviour that Fiona Yassin, a family psychotherapist who specialises in eating-disorder treatment at The Wave Clinic, believes is more common within relationships than people think. 'It often starts innocently with a couple exercising together or beginning a health plan, but then one person becomes in charge of the other.' The methods are disconcertingly pedestrian: one partner starts doing all the cooking, which covertly controls what the other eats. 'Messaging is done under the guise of caring about someone's health, such as, "You don't have great willpower, it's better if I make decisions for you,"' adds Yassin. 'But it's a powerful means of controlling others, hence why restriction around food and eating is often seen in cults.'

Spread the word

Speaking of control masquerading as advice, who can forget that spreader of nutty food ideologies, the Almond Mom. Yassin traces restrictive maternal messaging back to the 1950s, when clothing sizes became important and being a 'perfect eight or 10' reflected something about who we were. 'Since then, generations of mothers swathed and bathed in diet culture have passed on restrictive rule books,' she says, alluding to the clean-eating movement of a decade ago, along with the phenomenon of juice diets. 'Almond Mom culture – this ideology of no flour, no sugar, pick a grape or a slice of apple – is now the slogan of the moment around teenage girls looking at the very thin images working



If you had Almond Mom rules inflicted on you, history can repeat itself

through our fashion houses again.' It's also why those snide jokes about your aunty not needing dessert aren't just inappropriate, they're actively harmful, warns Yassin. 'We see an incredibly high rate of young people with disordered eating (which can progress to eating disorders) who have mums strongly influenced by diet culture.' Parents are influential, she explains, because their children believe they know everything – internalising negative messaging



around bodies just as they internalise messaging about road safety. In fact, so powerful is this belief that a threat to the success of eating-disorder treatment among young people is the disordered eating habits of their parents at home, which undoes positive messaging (known as ‘unpicking the knitting’), Yassin tells *WH*. It also means that if you had Almond Mom rules inflicted on you as a child, history can repeat itself.

At 40, Penny, a market research analyst from Oxfordshire, continues to manage the fallout of her mum’s obsession with restrictive diet culture when she was a teenager. ‘I still have recurrent nightmares in which she’s bullying me, weighing me or telling me I embarrass her because my clothes don’t suit me – the implication being I’m fat.’ A few years ago, Penny opened up to her mother, explaining what a hard time she’d given her – a conversation that led to forgiveness. What Penny didn’t foresee was developing Almond Mom behaviours of her own. ‘I didn’t even realise I was doing it until my husband pointed out how obsessed I am with weight and dieting – and how critical of body size I can be,’ she shares. ‘Even if what my mum did to me was traumatising, I subconsciously repeat those toxic patterns – the upside being that I have no children to traumatised.’

Such learned critiques stem from a contagious anxiety around food, diet and body-related issues, says Yassin – although Almond Mom tactics don’t have to be personal to be impactful. In Yassin’s clinic, the most common restriction messages she hears include coffee culture as a meal substitute (‘We’ve been for a coffee so we won’t need lunch’) and a warped relationship between exercise and fuel. Namely, that if you’ve eaten food, particularly a big breakfast, you need to burn it off. ‘Even though it takes about 500 calories a day just to switch your brain on in the morning, so you absolutely do not want to walk or run that off,’ she counters.

The golden rule

So, how can you deflect other people’s unhelpful noise – whether it’s dished up as restriction or a Huberman-inspired rigid routine? For 34-year-old Angela, an interior stylist in London, silence is the only way to shield herself from the restrictive diet messaging imparted by her older sister, who lost 4st and now considers herself a nutrition expert. ‘My sister has influenced both of our younger siblings into poor relationships with food,’ she tells *WH*. ‘I have to tune out when my family starts talking about calories and biohacks because I don’t want to become part of their depressing obsession to be “healthy”.’

If, as in Angela’s case, physical comments have become your default conversation topic, Yassin urges trying to spot when it happens – then

purposefully avoiding discussing physicality, be it someone’s shape, what they’re eating, their clothes or even how their skin looks. When you first see someone, it’s easy to blurt out, ‘You look great!’ But a more neutral, ‘It’s great to see you!’ shuts down any appearance chat before it’s begun. If someone is pushing a health behaviour that you’re not comfortable with, feel free to assert a boundary. Try saying, ‘I can hear that you enjoyed XYZ, but it’s not that important to me.’

The reality is, without a captive audience, the propaganda of routine and restriction loses its muscle power. IRL, a regime’s practicality may fall short of the viral hype. Sharma admits that even for passionate Huberman fans, recreating the schedule of a California-based neuroscientist turned biohacking bro-in-chief is unlikely to be practical when you have to commute to a desk job – and ferry family around. Yassin, who works at the rebuild-the-pieces end of restrictive health behaviours, favours moderation and listening to that other powerful offline voice – your own. ‘Instead of advising someone how to become a refined version of themselves, let’s allow people to enjoy being themselves,’ she says. ‘They’re absolutely okay doing what they’re doing. And if people do wish to find things, they’ll find them for themselves.’ On that note – enough said. **WH**

How to swap rules for values

Lynsey Romo, associate professor in the Department of Communication at North Carolina State University, researches communication strategies behind health stigmas and healthy habits. Here, she explains how to tune into your health values – then use them to guide your choices

Direct an evangelist back online

Fallen victim to a one-way evangelical health chat? ‘Explain how you’re happy that they’ve found health behaviours that resonate with them, and give them a 10-minute grace period to talk about it with you,’ says Dr Romo. Then set a boundary. ‘When you’ve heard enough, direct them to social media channels to engage with their tribe.’

Accept uncomfortable emotions

It’s normal to feel threatened when a partner adopts a new routine, says Dr Romo. It’s what you do with those emotions that matters. ‘There may even be a temptation to sabotage their habits,’ she notes. But before you tie their shoelaces together, ‘remember that your partner is likely changing something for their health – it’s not a reflection of the relationship’.

Say no to nagging

Above all, always remember this: you’re the CEO of your health. ‘There’s absolutely no need to adopt behaviours that you don’t think are healthy or realistic for your lifestyle,’ adds Dr Romo. Her advice? If someone persists in trying to convince you to do something, explain that they wouldn’t like it if you were constantly nagging them to change their beliefs or behaviours. You deserve the same grace.

Does your period tracking
reproductive

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Do the health
benefits
outweigh
the risks?

apps pose a threat to your rights?

Feeding blush-coloured apps reams of your menstrual health data, enabling you to keep tabs on your cycle or pregnancy plan, is something many of us do without thinking. But as UK police are revealed to be requesting data to investigate women suspected of illegal abortions, *WH* investigates if inviting Big Data into your menstrual cycle management is really worth the risk

WORDS: LAUREN CLARK ➔



In the 1950s, on the banks of Lake Rutanzige in Central Africa, a Belgian geologist called Jean de Heinzelin made a fascinating discovery. He had stumbled upon a 10cm-long baboon fibula, later estimated to be around 20,000 years old. The careful notches carved into what is now known as the ‘Ishango Bone’ are considered the earliest example of human mathematics.

But a woman called Claudia Zaslavsky had a different idea. In the 90s, the American ethnomathematician theorised that the small, systematic etchings could be something that you might recognise from your own life. Namely, those of a woman logging the lunar phases in order to track her menstrual cycle. Despite those before us not having access to reliable modern contraceptives and having fewer periods (thanks to spending more time pregnant and breastfeeding), the feminine urge to keep tabs on when your fertility peaks and when your period is due has been documented in myriad ways for millennia, from marks on cave walls and secret codes in 19th-century diaries to gel-penned dates scribbled in pink, padlocked journals.

Then cometh the iPhone era; a recent poll commissioned by the Information Commissioner’s Office suggested that a third of UK women now use period tracking

Police are investigating suspicious miscarriages

apps. First, there were Glow and Clue in 2013. The latter in particular stood out for its unapologetically feminist framing and period-positive language; its founder, the Danish internet entrepreneur Ida Tin, became a figurehead for female empowerment for the era. Then Flo, founded by two men from Belarus, followed in 2015 – the same year that Apple Health debuted its own period-focused feature. Natural Cycles, a pregnancy planner/avoider, launched in 2017, and Moody Month a year later. Hundreds more exist. But in June 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade*: the 50-year-old ruling that established the right to an abortion in America. Its sudden reversal opened up the very real possibility that the digital trails left by period tracking apps could become legally compromising. ‘Right now, and I mean this instant, delete every digital trace of any menstrual tracking,’ Gina Neff, executive director of the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy at the University of Cambridge and author of *Self-Tracking* wrote in a viral post on X (formerly Twitter).

Now, almost two years on – and over 3,662 miles away – from that Supreme Court ruling, evidence that adds weight to Professor Neff’s directive has come to light.

In late October, the news site *Tortoise* found evidence of UK police requesting access to period tracking app data when investigating women who have suffered ‘unexplained pregnancy losses’. Meanwhile, more women are being prosecuted for procuring abortions after the legal limit, such as Carla Foster, a mum-of-three who took abortion pills while 32 to 34 weeks pregnant, triggering

a stillbirth. In June, Foster was jailed, leading to weeks of headlines and horrified conversations across the nation. The mood music is ominous. And if we’re living in a world where our reproductive rights risk being rolled back at any moment – and where our grasp on who’s doing what with our health data is hazy at best – it begs an uncomfortable question. Once bastions of body and biology-positive female empowerment, are menstrual cycle tracking apps no longer safe for us?

Tracking trouble

It’s a big question. But let’s start with the letter of the law – as it pertains to accessing an abortion in the UK. The Abortion Act 1967 states that a termination can take place within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy in England, Scotland and Wales. (Abortion was only decriminalised in Northern Ireland in 2019.) However, under Section 58 of the Offence Against the Person Act 1861, it’s illegal for a woman to take abortion pills to cause a miscarriage after the 24-week limit. At the time of writing, five women had been charged with this offence in 2023. It might not sound like that many, but consider that number in context: in the 160 years between its passing and 2022 there have only been three prosecutions in total. And even though Carla Foster – the aforementioned mum who was jailed last summer – had her 28-month custodial sentence reduced to 14 months, suspended, her case was, again, a landmark.

Back to the *Tortoise* investigation. Journalists uncovered instances of police requesting tests to detect the presence of abortion pills in the blood, urine and placentas of women under investigation. While experts say they’re not currently aware of any court cases that have featured period tracking app data, at present, Jonathan Lord, co-chair of the British Society of Abortion Care Providers and NHS consultant gynaecologist told *The Guardian* that such data could suggest that

someone knowingly took abortion pills past the legal limit. ‘A lot of the defences [of women accused of illegal abortions] are going to be: “I thought I was 20 weeks, but I was actually more than that,”’ he explained. He then pointed to instances of police removing phones and computers from women suspected of having an abortion past the legal limit following a natural miscarriage or pregnancy loss. ‘This is damaging enough as it leaves women frightened and isolated immediately after suffering a substantial trauma.’

Logging season

As with the majority of project innovations with sticking power, period tracking apps have been so successful because they meet a consumer need. ‘These easy and efficient apps have transformed how women monitor their menstrual cycles,’ acknowledges Mez Aref-Adib, a consultant gynaecologist at London Gynaecology. While some of us rely on memory and awareness of our bodies’ rhythms and symptoms – such as breast tenderness, abdominal pain and mood swings – indicating where we’re at, these apps can make tracking our cycles easy. Dr Aref-Adib finds it helpful to review the period tracking data of her patients. ‘Aside from highlighting more fertile stretches for those wanting to start – or avoid – building a family, the data can indicate medical conditions such as PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) through irregular periods and monitor the impact of medication, like a newly inserted Mirena coil,’ she explains. ‘It could also flag early menopause or indicate if under-eating, over-exercising, stress or something else may be behind delayed, missed or changing bleeds. Knowledge is power.’ Power to see trends in periods past and more optimally plan your future. (Think: a sexy weekend away when you’re riding high pre-ovulation →

‘The data can highlight fertile stretches, as well as PCOS’

Tracked changes

but getting lots of downtime as your period beckons.)

But data is governed by the social and cultural realities in which we live. And these are subject to change, leading some to believe that the current risk versus reward ratio has made digital menstrual tracking no longer worth it. 'Data that feels safe to users one day might no longer feel safe the next,' notes Professor Neff. 'Those in the UK might feel at ease now, but what if things change?' The fact we're already seeing UK police requesting menstrual data is, to her mind, 'chilling'. To make matters worse, the UK government is thought to be seeking to loosen data protection laws. Post-Brexit, they're looking to amend the UK's general data protection regulation (GDPR) policy – the toughest in the world and passed by the EU – in the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill. Which, per a government press release, will be more 'business-friendly'.

To get a clear view of how safe your health data is right now, *Women's Health* puts in a call to Kevin Modiri. A partner and solicitor at the law firm Nelsons, he specialises in data breaches, cyber security and online safety. 'As it stands, menstrual tracking apps operating in the UK are able to gather and use health data in a lawful, fair and transparent manner as part of Article 6 of the UK GDPR,' he explains. He notes that when we install any app, we're usually presented with a long list of T&Cs to agree with before we're able to proceed. 'This normally includes details of the purposes for which data is being collected and how it's intended to be processed – for instance, whether it would be shared with a third party,' he says – adding that such parties could be advertising companies or scientific research bodies. So, if the police were to come knocking at the door of the company behind your tracking app, asking for your data? Modiri explains that said company could be asked to comply as part of UK

GDPR, as long as there's a lawful basis – such as if it's vital to the life of another or in the public interest. In the T&Cs, you might have even been asked to consent to your data being handed to law enforcement. 'Technically, the app *could* refuse,' he says. 'But it may be forced to hand the data over via a court order.'

Another problem with this phenomenon is the fact that – should period tracking data see its day in court – it won't necessarily paint a realistic picture. 'Many women don't have a "typical" 28-day cycle every month,' notes Dr Aref-Adib. 'What's more, these apps are only as accurate as the data provided by the user.' Because the apps rely on you to self-report when your period starts and ends,

holes and inaccuracies in the data are a given. The number of days you menstruate can vary significantly; those on hormonal contraception, such as the pill, often experience greater regularity. And many simply have irregular periods naturally.

Data leak

The next logical question to ask is what these apps are doing to keep you and your data safe. Major apps contacted by *WH* insisted that protection of women was their utmost priority. When asked if it has a policy about handing over data to the police, the period tracking app company Flo Health said that it would 'balance its commitment to protecting its



Staying
anonymous
can protect
your data

‘Apps could be made to hand over data via a court order’

users’ privacy with its obligations to comply with legal orders to disclose user information’, and that ‘Flo will not disclose any personal information without a valid legal reason, court order or warrant’. The app also has an anonymous mode, meaning you can use it without providing them with any identifying details.

Moody Month said it is ‘against any use of this data for legal cases against women, as it sees it as weaponising women’s health’. It also said, ‘We are fully committed to protecting user data and will never sell user data to any third party.’ If you wish to delete your data, this can be done in the app. Similarly, Berlin-based Clue said: ‘We will never allow [users’] private health data to be used against them. We have never disclosed such data to any authority, and we never will... We believe that German and European legal privacy and due process protections would be an effective safeguard against any government’s attempt to obtain Clue users’ data to prosecute an alleged abortion.’ Natural Cycles said that in order to avoid a situation like those detailed in the Tortoise investigation, it has introduced a ‘fully anonymous mode’ so that even the app wouldn’t be able to identify who a set of data belongs to.

Breaking the cycle

So, should you delete your period tracking app and go back to marks in your diary? Honestly, only you can answer that question. It’s all going to come down to your personal risk-to-benefit calculation. It’s true that for many, menstrual tracking apps have illuminated invaluable truths about how their bodies work. And the reality is that cases investigating women suspected of taking abortion pills after legal limits remain rare. They exist, though – and, as Professor Neff cautions, legally, the landscape can change dramatically. ‘It should worry us all that women’s ability to make good decisions for their bodies is at stake.’ **WHY**



The new rules of intimate data protection

Experts share best practice for keeping your very personal information as safe as possible

01

Actually read the T&Cs

An obvious point, sure. But consider the speed at which your impatient thumbs scroll to the end of the small print and press ‘accept’ without taking in so much as a word and you’ll understand that it’s one that bears repeating. ‘You won’t know what you’ve signed until something goes wrong,’ Kevin Modiri explains. ‘At worst, this could mean your data being made freely available online.’

02

Formally request your data be removed

Simply deleting your app of choice might not wipe your personal information, warns Modiri. ‘Data that’s already been gathered would still be stored, so you may have to make an express request to erase it,’ he explains. ‘You can request deletion of data stored about you under UK GDPR. Exceptions exist, in which case seek legal advice or contact the Information Commissioner’s Office.’

03

Only share intimate data with people you trust

This is vital. Some apps – such as Flo, with its new Flo For Partners feature – allows you to share cycle data with your other half. Flo says it was highly requested, and it may well be a useful timesaver in a healthy relationship. But in the wrong hands, it leaves you open to abuse. This is your health – and your information. Never feel pressured to share it with a partner.

The next version of YOU

Picture your dream life – then, where you’re at right now. Here and now you might not have the abundant wealth or tropical-island home enjoyed by fantasy you, but there should be common threads. Plus, the sense that what you’re doing now is helping build that vision. If that’s absent, it’s probably time to make a change. It’s not easy; transforming any element of your life requires graft, support and inspiration. Over the following pages – with advice from top psychologists and women who’ve been there – we’ve got the formula you need to get going on your much-cherished goals →



WORDS: ABIGAIL CUFFEY

PHOTOGRAPHY:
JEAN-YVES LEMOIGNE

STYLING: ROSE LAUTURE



So, you're ready to change your life?

We talked to three experts who work with women who want to alter something in their life. Here are the most effective (and doable) methods that truly work for the long haul

Get super clear on your endgame

'If you don't know what you're working towards, you don't know where you're going,' says clinical psychologist Jessica Smedley. 'The more specific you can be, the more connected you are to what that means.' Also important to suss out from the start: a reasonable pace and time frame.

Maximise your motivation

Is the desire coming from you or someone else? That's the difference between an intrinsic motivator and an extrinsic one, says clinical psychologist Chloe Carmichael, author of *Nervous Energy: Harness The Power Of Your Anxiety*. 'Intrinsic motivation has the highest success rate because there's less resistance.' It means you're actually pursuing a goal versus just making a display of it. If you need to go from extrinsic to intrinsic, take inspiration from 'motivational interviewing', a method Dr Carmichael says is popular in (but by no means limited to) the addiction space. Ask yourself: what will happen if I'm able to make this change? Then list the benefits. Next, picture what would happen if you don't make that change. Write out the downsides. 'Getting in touch with the facts can awaken your intrinsic desire,' says Dr Carmichael.

Lead with your strengths

When Barbara Becker Holstein, positive psychologist and author of *The Enchanted Self*, meets a new patient, rather than saying, 'Tell me your problems,' she asks, 'What are your talents? What are your strengths?' When you're trying to identify a new goal or path (or give yourself a boost), reflect on what you're good at first. Make three lists, suggests Dr Holstein: your talents (even something you did as a child); your interests (you were once in a book club); and where you have promise (such as that business course you wanted to take but couldn't). 'Identifying untapped potential is the secret to "correcting" the way a person behaves,' says Dr Holstein.

Hope for the best (but plan for a slog)

Dr Carmichael advises leaving space for the possibility that you might take to this change rapidly or with ease. But she also recommends clients make video messages for themselves for various points along their journey – including one for getting

back on track. (Voice notes are also an option.) Perhaps you've wanted to make lifestyle changes but had a spontaneous weekend of debauchery. 'Instead of throwing in the towel, you'd watch this get-back-in-the-battle video of yourself from when you were in a clear headspace,' she explains. You're far more likely to push past this blip by giving yourself grace than by chastising yourself.

Satisfy those secondary gains

Secondary gains refers to the secret perks that keep you unwittingly tied to the behaviour you're trying to change. Take alcohol: the secondary gains beyond the dopamine that comes with that first sip might be feelings of closeness with friends or fast-tracking you from a work headspace to a social one. Address the secondary gains by asking yourself what else could help you access those feelings? Whether it's a sober rave or watching a play together that makes you cry, there are no wrong answers.

Set your (firm) boundaries

About 90% of Dr Smedley's work with women centres on boundaries. 'We think about others first and prioritise tasks, but we can't keep going at the expense of high blood pressure or burnout,' she says. In other words, boundaries are not just nice to have – they're critical.

Curate a strong team

The most important thing? Support. Think: who are the people in your life who will help keep you on track or whose attitude to life inspires you to make aligned choices? Make time for them, alongside any professionals (whether a therapist or coach) or unofficial mentors. It really does take a village. →

Changing your mind



Some day
soon, you'll
look back at
who you used
to be in the rear-
view mirror



'MY LATER-LIFE FITNESS JOURNEY IS TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF PERSEVERANCE'

Marlene Flowers first set foot in a gym when she was 62. At 65, she began competing in bodybuilding contests

I started my fitness journey in 2015, at 58, when most people are slowing down. My son, Ryan, became my trainer. After a few weeks of building strength, my aches and pains disappeared.

At-home workouts were my go-to for four years. Then I joined a gym to expand my fitness regimen. Now you can't keep me out of the gym. I train seven days a week and organise workouts to hit different body parts on different days.

I started posting my journey on Instagram and went viral. I became known as the internet's grandma (@granny_guns), with strangers saying I was their inspiration.

Last year, I took a leap of faith and competed in two bodybuilding shows. I was the oldest competitor in every category, so it took a lot of courage. My next goal is to get my bodybuilding pro card; I love a good challenge.

My journey is a testament to the power of perseverance, because it's never too late. At 67, my age is just a number. It's not a limitation but a badge of honour I wear with pride.



▼
Reach
towards
your goals
and the rest
will follow

'TRIATHLON TRAINING HELPS ME AMID THE STRESS OF LIVING - AND PARENTING - IN UKRAINE'

From exhausted mother of two to triathlete who trains in a war zone and competes around the world, Juliya Azzopardi Mazur credits sport with helping her find positivity

As a kid, I had a medical exemption from PE owing to chronic anaemia and stomach issues. Up to the age of 28, I didn't do anything athletic except go to the gym occasionally.

Then, one day in 2016, I saw an advertisement on Facebook for a fun run. I signed up and had such fun with a group of 'non-runners.' Afterwards, I started training two or three times a week at the Olympic National Sports Complex in Kyiv.

Slowly, I fell in love with running, even though it was hard for me. I hired a coach and set a goal of running a 10K in three months' time. I'd go to a track twice a week in the evening, dragging my kids with me (my youngest was four). They'd play with toys while I ran.

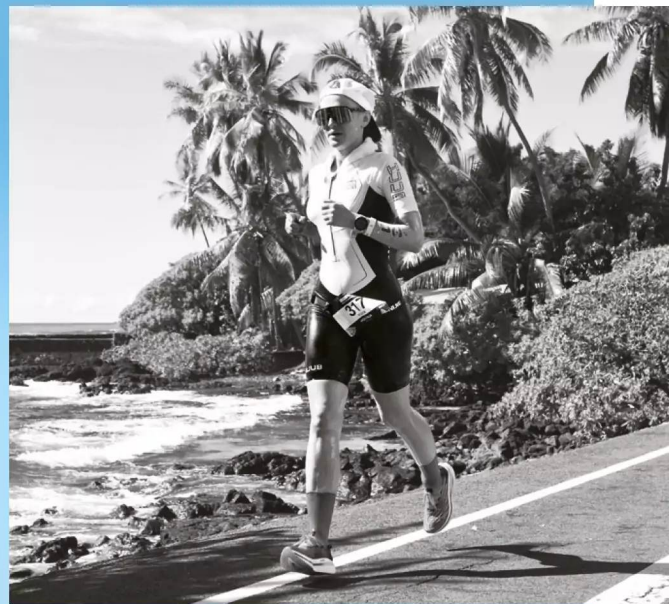
The group I was running with were also triathletes. I wondered

how it was possible for them to train so much, yet feel so good. Then I got my first injury and was only allowed to swim. So, as with running, I found a coach and joined a group of swimmers. Swimming one lap felt like a never-ending marathon at first. But by that point, all I was missing was a bike.

So after a few months of swimming, I bought my first one and learned how to ride it. I spent nearly a year doing all three disciplines before I attempted my first sprint triathlon race. Once I completed the first one, I started doing them one after another. I saw that people of different ages, shapes and professions could do a triathlon.

Already, I was dreaming of attempting a 70.3 distance (half Ironman) one day. I went for it and completed my first only a few months after beginning my triathlon career. Triathlons changed everything for me. I gave up bad habits and I even became a better mother. As a full-time athlete, I understand that it's not about the amount of time you give to your children, but the quality of it.

I've been coaching myself for the past two years and training every day. Living in a country during a war, my training helps with stress – it's like medicine to me. You can distract your mind from everything happening around you. ➔



‘I TAPPED INTO MY UNIQUE POTENTIAL ONCE I DECIDED TO BE A ROLE MODEL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN’

Andraéa LaVant is a disability consultant and advocate, and was the first Black disabled woman to go down the Oscars’ red carpet. As she worked to transform the world around her, she also went through her own (major) mindset shift

As a Black physically disabled child and a wheelchair user, I grew accustomed to not seeing myself represented in anything. Not on TV, in films or even in my community. I never felt that I fully belonged anywhere. In school, I was an overachiever, which was an attempt to overcompensate for what society told me was a deficit. So I tried to earn my way or, more specifically, to get people to not see my disability.

My parents raised me to live independently and to follow my dreams. So I left home at 18 for college to study public relations. Given my disability-related needs, that meant finding support. Without assistance, I couldn’t get out of bed or dress myself. Yet my desire to live and work on my own never waned.

I chose to move to the city, thinking that the public transport network would allow me some independence. And also that I’d have no problem finding resources for healthcare, accessible housing and more. Within a few weeks, I realised I was mistaken. I spent mornings lying in bed and even nights sleeping in my wheelchair, wondering if someone was going to come, as they’d promised.

I kept thinking, ‘Man, if I can’t navigate these systems as a person who’s had access to a quality education and been privileged in certain ways, then how much more are folks struggling who don’t have access to these resources?’

A couple of years later, I was presented with an opportunity to work at a think tank on programmes that help young

people with disabilities transition into work. As much as I’d avoided confronting my disability, I had a moment of: if not me, then who is going to be the person that I needed growing up? That was how my disability work and advocacy started. I went on to work for the Girl Scouts for seven years, leading their disability-inclusion work.

I started my consulting firm (LaVant Consulting) about five years ago because I kept bumping up against people who wanted to address disability and connect with disabled people but didn’t know how. I’ve grown a small but mighty team working on content, marketing strategy and more. This also allows us to address things such as representation in fashion, entertainment and tech.

We recently hosted Los Angeles’ first fully accessible and inclusive fashion show. We brought models and designers and people of all identities together in a space that allowed them to see themselves. We created something that was aesthetically beautiful but also truly accommodating.

Often, the idea of ‘overcoming’ is used when it comes to disability, as if it’s something negative you need to leap over. But I’ve determined that my purpose is to take up space.

When you find out who you truly want to be, the world suddenly looks clearer



CLOTHES: JACKET, MICHÉ; SHIRT, ALO YOGA; EARRINGS, ALEXIS BITTAR; HAIR, INDIA WILLIAMS AT HONEY ARTISTS; MAKE-UP, ADRIAN ALVARADO AT HONEY ARTISTS; PROP STYLING, MIANG KATOH; MODEL, KAREN PERRIOT; AT WILHELMINA; ADDITIONAL REPORTING, ANDI BREITOWICH



Changing your mind



'IN EXPLORING WHO I WAS, BEYOND THE ROLE OF A MOTHER, I DISCOVERED UNTAPPED POTENTIAL'

Soon after Jenn Drummond, a former stay-at-home mum and author of BreakProof, survived a near-fatal accident, she decided it was time to live in a bigger, more epic way for herself – and for her family

I was driving home in 2018 when I saw a vehicle in front slow down. I went to move into the fast lane but didn't make it. After flips and rolls, I landed upside down in the central reservation. I was pulled through the windshield and taken to the hospital, where I was cleared. I was fine. Later, the police called and said, 'We've rebuilt this accident different ways and can't build a scenario where you live, let alone walk away.'

After something like that, everything is magic. The little things that used to irritate me – say, the kids arguing – seemed beautiful when I allowed them to be.

Three weeks after my accident, a friend went running on a trail, slipped, hit her head and never came home. In processing these two situations, I realised I don't get to choose when I die, but I sure get to choose how I live.

Up to that point, I thought, 'I'm a mum, so I need to be at home.' But it hit me that I could pursue other aspects of my life in parallel – and that would be a more positive way to model parenthood.

I began to explore who I was in small ways, like going out to dinner alone so I could remember what I liked to eat (not my kids' leftovers). I realised that I'd rather do something epic with my life rather than just make everyone else happy. So I made a list of things I want to do before I die: go sailing, see the pyramids, try Indian food in India... My three principles for Life 2.0 were experiencing life, doing hard things and inspiring others.

When I was turning 40 in 2020, I decided to climb a mountain called Ama Dablam in Nepal. But soon, my coach proposed a bigger challenge: become the first female to climb the seven second summits, which are the second-highest points on the seven continents (and harder to climb than the highest because they're steeper, less travelled and more remote).

Last June, I completed my seventh summit and set a world record. Sometimes our goals evolve and we've no clue how we're going to do them. But why not try? **WH**

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WITH GUESTS...

**JULIE ADENUGA
& REBEKAH JADE
FRANCESCA HAYWARD
& GIULIA PEDITTO
SOMA SARA
& FABIAN DOMENECH**



**PRIYA AHLUWALIA
& JASMINE ST CLIERE
RUTH MADELEY
& NAOMI HEFFERMAN
MIA MCKENNA-BRUCE
& MIREIA BORRAS
**AND MANY MORE
FOR SEASON THREE.****



Spa, spa away...

Like a good fairy tale, a great spa has the power to transport you to another land. Check in to one of these spa hotels – and check out from the world for a while





01 Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa

What: Downton decadence in the New Forest

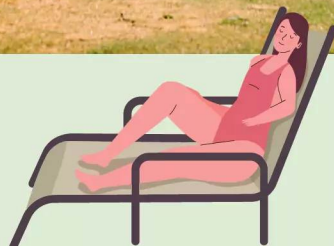
Where: New Forest, Hampshire

How much: Rooms from £405, spa days from £210

Who: Saskia Quirke, fashion director

What's the vibe?

Set in 130 acres of Hampshire countryside, the 18th century house is giving Downton, complete with a grand entrance, drawing room and roaring fire to warm your cockles. Oh, and did I mention there's a croquet lawn? But what elevates this quintessentially British hotel is its location; with both beach and forest on its doorstep, there's plenty to explore



– and many means by which to do it. Paddleboarding, kayaking, sea swimming and mountain biking are just a few of the activities on offer. If all that sounds a bit *much*, there's plenty more to keep you occupied while you're horizontal. The freshly renovated spa is an altogether more modern affair. The focal point of the pristine space is a dazzling, light-filled atrium, which houses a 17m pool and a hydrotherapy area. The space is lined with loungers made for catnapping; that the room is heated to Mediterranean temperatures means you'll have no trouble doing so, either.

Any top treatments?

Don't leave without having the warm oil massage. The bespoke

The light-filled hydrotherapy atrium is the dazzling focal point of the spa

treatment can be tailored to be invigorating or calming, and you can even opt for a CBD-infused oil from the luxe brand OTO. You're subsequently kneaded into a jelly-like state, then handed a sorbet amuse-bouche (any massage that finishes with ice cream is fine by me). The spa is partnered with Amethyst Trust, which specialises in providing safe and soothing massages for people with or recovering from cancer. If you know someone in need of extra care, this is a great spot for them to get some deep relaxation, while knowing they're in expert hands.

The best of the rest

Taking forest bathing to new levels are the treehouses. Park any





Travel Well



visions of the one your childhood neighbour built: this is luxury accommodation, suspended 35ft above the ground. While the price per night marks this out as special occasion territory (prices start at £995), they're completely self-contained, with daily breakfast hampers, mini kitchenettes and a concierge. Book the one with the hot tub for a real taste of the high life.

Don't leave without...

Doing the walk from the hotel to the beach, even if you have to do it in gale force winds (thank you, Great British weather). The hot chocolate waiting for you at the Cliffhanger cafe is worth it, you have my word.





02

Rockcliffe Hall

What: A wellness wonderland in North Yorkshire

Where: Darlington, County Durham

How much: Rooms from £380, spa days from £180

Who: Nikki Osman, deputy editor

What's the vibe?

A lone rabbit hops across the grass before disappearing into the bushes beyond; later, you'll follow a winding path through the grounds that leads to a walled garden, where fresh vegetables spring from the soil; later still, you'll dine in a light-filled orangery, where plate after plate of foams, puffs and powders will deliver you to a new dimension. That the latter included a wine flight might have had something to do with the evening's ethereal quality. But, yes. My name isn't Alice, but I am in wonderland. And don't the brains behind Rockcliffe Hall know it. The 18th-century hall and estate is a stone's throw from Croft, the village where Lewis Carroll spent his teenage years that's said to have been the inspiration behind some of Alice's adventures; like the town's spa water, which Londoners flocked to Croft to drink just as Alice sipped on her own mysterious potion.

Any top treatments?

Launched in May 2023, the Hydra Glow Facial is designed to be deeply hydrating, with hard-working



hydrators such as hyaluronic acid and prickly pear extract doing the heavy lifting. Like Alice, I begin the experience by choosing my path; in this case, it's the scent that'll shape the next 60 minutes. I choose the quality I need most: 'tranquility' – a blend of vanilla, sandalwood and cedarwood – before my therapist proceeds to place ice globes on my cheeks. A form of cryotherapy (the idea that extreme cold wields health-supporting powers), it works by constricting blood vessels, reducing the appearance of redness – and feels like the

Produce from the walled gardens is harvested for the on-site restaurant

skincare equivalent of leaping into a lake on a hot day. All the products used in the treatment are designed to help the skin adapt to any environment and – after a facial, scalp and foot massage – I've well and truly adapted to this one.

The best of the rest

The food in the Orangery, courtesy of head chef Paul Nicholson, has an enchanting quality. The tasting menu is built around seasonal produce, with dishes featuring ingredients grown in the gardens or foraged within the estate. The trout puffs are simultaneously confusing and delightful, a haddock velour is served with the nicest scone I've ever eaten and a Granny Smith granita has all the sharpness you'd expect from the kind plucked from a tree before it melts into your tongue.

Don't leave without...

A spell in the spa garden, where you'll watch those rabbits from the comfort of an al fresco Jacuzzi while a jet more powerful than any potions pummels your weary joints. Wonderland, indeed.

03 The Grove Hotel

What: A country retreat a stone's throw from London

Where: Chandler's Cross, Hertfordshire

How much: One-night spa escapes from £395 per person, including breakfast, a three-course dinner, an 80-minute treatment and unlimited use of the spa

Who: Leo Bear, *WH* contributor

What's the vibe?

Minutes from the M25 by car and a world away in energy, this newly revamped banger of a spa hotel is commutable from the capital while over-delivering on the country hotel vibes. And with the tagline of 'London's country retreat', it knows it. You begin to feel The Grove's cortisol-curbing powers as you wind your way up the driveway. But it's within the grassy meadows, landscaped gardens and woodland trails of the grounds that the hotel really comes into its own. Do your very own art tour as you wonder through the sculpture garden, follow one of the hotel's running routes or take it all in from beneath the bubbles in your roll-top bath. London... who?

Any top treatments?

Bamford – of luxury, organic and sustainable skincare fame – was brought in as a spa partner last year, and the signature Bamford Facial does for your skin what the air outside does for your nervous system. The hot and cold stone massage is designed to release

tension and it does it so well, it sends your mind off wondering the grounds again. The facial is tailored to the needs of your skin using the Bamford products and leaves my smog-ridden pores positively glowing. When you're done, have a dip in the black-tiled mosaic pool before flopping out in front of the tropical fish tank in the aptly named relaxation room, where watching the fish change direction is basically visual ASMR.

The best of the rest

Where to begin? For a hotel famous for its spa, there are enough extra-curriculars to satisfy even the most reluctant of relaxers. In any given week, the itinerary could rival a hen do – with axe throwing, falconry

and bike rides. But there's plenty for the wellness-inclined, too, with breathwork classes and candlelit yoga. Built up an appetite? There are few joints better equipped to sate it than The Stables, where modern British plates (Cornish sea bass; Launceston lamb shoulder; smoked Scottish salmon) are produced using ingredients from the hotel's vegetable garden.

Don't leave without...

Shooting some arrows (yes, really). Set your alarm for silly o'clock and scamper into the dew-covered forest for a spot of archery before breakfast. We'll make an archer of you yet. *WH*



WH PROMOTION

BECOME A PROFESSIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH IN 2024

Would you love to work in the fast growing Health & Wellness Profession making a real difference to the health and wellbeing of others? Are there areas of your own health you would like to improve too?

Then consider a rewarding and purposeful career as a Health and Wellness Coach. Health Coaching is one of the fastest-growing professions in this decade full of varied career opportunities and is being described as 'the Future of Healthcare'.



Successful Practising UK Health Coaches: Sheree-Ann and Sarah



HCA team at London 3-day live event

WHAT IS A HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH?

A Health Coach is a specialist type of Life Coach who works with people to improve their lives in any area that will have a positive impact on their wellbeing: nutrition, physical health, happiness, vitality, life purpose, relationships, career, self-development and more.

Health Coaches coach others to live their best life, healthy and well; they can work in private practice, with doctors, chiropractors, psychologists, at health centres and clinics, within corporate and at wellness retreats. They can also run groups in person or online, work within education, or publishing and can practise in a multitude of flexible ways, working either full time or part-time.

THE HEALTH &

COULD YOU BE A GOOD HEALTH COACH?

Many Health Coaches who train with us have areas of their own health and wellbeing they would like to improve; this motivation can stem from personal health challenges as well as a desire to help your loved ones.

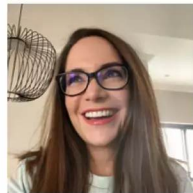
Whatever brings people to us, the common thread among all of our students and graduates is a deep desire to create a genuine, positive impact on the health and wellbeing of others, and become part of this powerful solution to our current healthcare crisis.



"I have grown so much while studying with HCA. The course has added a whole new dimension to my life. Since

starting the course, I've lost 8kg, and my Rheumatologist is blown away by how my inflammation levels have dropped, to the point that she wants to wean me off my medication. I feel more energetic, positive and have a whole new lease on life."

– Sharon Rae (HCA Graduate)



"While I thought I was 'happy' in my previous career, I always had this deep rooted need to be contributing to society in a way that would have a more positive impact. I wanted to

make a difference. Fundamentally people want to live healthy and happy lives, but many don't know how or lack the motivation and support to make this a reality. This course has equipped me with the knowledge and tools that I share with my clients to help them transform their health and their lives. I now feel satisfied that I am making a difference."

– Juanita Hughes (HCA Graduate)



"As soon as I started the course, I began to see the amazing health transformations people experience and I knew this was what I was destined to do. I work with so many women now and love seeing the joy when they start living really well. My practice is fully booked

with a waiting list and all of my clients now come through referral."

– Vicky (HCA Graduate)



BECOME A HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH IN JUST 12 MONTHS.

Find out how you can train with the UK's most experienced Health Coaching & Nutrition team by **booking a free Discover Health Coaching call** or join one of our **free webinars** with the Directors of HCA.

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The next intake date for our part time, 12-Month Level 5 Diploma in Health & Wellness Coaching is **10th April 2024**.



Credit: #BikeisBest

CYCLE NOW, PAY LATER!

The Cycle to Work Scheme is an employee benefit which is currently in high demand due to the enormous benefits it brings to users. It's never been easier to get fit on your way to work!

- Save between 30 – 47% on any type of bike
- Access to affordable travel options during the cost-of-living crisis
- Get fitter and healthier in both mind and body
- Incorporate exercise into your daily routine – no need to hit the gym after work
- Arrive at work feeling energised, motivated and ready to face the day
- Combat climate change by using sustainable transport for everyday journeys
- Help employers to achieve their net-zero goals

Cycling to work brings significant financial savings over using a car – no fuel costs, expensive insurance, servicing or tax.

FITNESS EDIT

More people cycling means roads will become safer, less congested and easier to use for those that need to. The quality of the air we breathe will improve, and our mental and physical health will benefit, as will the health of planet Earth.

The key to successfully using the Cycle to Work Scheme is to use a provider which is best suited to your needs. Not-for-profit provider, Green Commute Initiative (GCI) has no spend limits or ownership fees, enabling users to make the maximum possible savings available to them.

Any type of bike

With no spend limits, you can get any type of bike suited to your needs. This includes ebikes, cargo bikes, the usual pedal cycles and second-hand bikes (with warranty). Ebike conversion kits are also allowed and you can even get a Brompton bike on 12 or 18 month subscription.

How does it work?

To access the scheme, you must be employed and on PAYE. Your employer must agree to pay for the scheme voucher upfront, whom you repay directly from your gross pay (before you've paid any tax).

This means you save the tax and NI on the value of the bike; the amount you save depends on your tax bracket.

The interest-free payments back to your employer can be spread over a number of years (two years is typical) making it a very manageable monthly expenditure. A bike costing £2,000 could only cost you £1,400 with GCI!

◀ Scan the QR code to check out the savings calculator or visit: <https://www.greencommuteinitiative.uk/savings/>

Green Commute Initiative is an award-winning provider of the Cycle to Work Scheme and has made accessing the scheme easy and hassle-free.



Get in touch today www.greencommuteinitiative.uk or 020 3740 1836



Credit: #BikeisBest

Credit: #BikeisBest

WH PROMOTION



NO COMPROMISE.

TCA was born at the heart of London in 2012 from the minds of athlete-designers passionate about creating the ultimate sportswear that simplifies the lives of women who need their regular dose of sport.

The requirements? Hyper-functional, light, and breathable sportswear without compromising on style... and on price.

The results? TCA has become one of the top-selling brands online in the UK, garnering hundreds of thousands of devotees addicted to gym workouts, running, or cycling. Women who needed pockets on leggings, breathable thermal layers in tops, and high-tech fabric that looks great have found their go-to brand. **Join the Club now:** To nurture the passion for sport, the brand introduced the TCA Club in September, offering exclusive rewards and offers. **Join for free at www.tca.fit.**

THE HEALTH &

#1

SOLUTION
AGAINST HAIR LOSS



NEOFOLLICCS HAIR TECHNOLOGY

Discover Neofollics Hair Technology, your trusted partner for healthy hair, recommended by dermatologists and pharmacists worldwide. Their scientifically formulated solutions deliver effective results for hormonal hair loss, stress-induced hair thinning, and hereditary hair loss.

Experience Neofollics' personalised approach, designed specifically for the unique needs of men and women. Trust in proven results and join over 1 million satisfied users who have experienced the effectiveness of Neofollics.

A team of hair growth specialists is ready to guide you on your journey to healthy and vibrant hair.

Scan the QR code and let their expertise help you find the most effective solutions for your hair condition.



FITNESS EDIT

WANT TO STAY ACTIVE? TRY TURMERIC+

From gardeners and walkers to cyclists and workout warriors, so many people are discovering how Turmeric+ can help them stay active.

FutureYou Cambridge is offering you the opportunity to try a free 28 day supply of their leading joint supplement: Turmeric+.*

Based in Cambridge, the company works with some of the world's leading experts in science and nutrition, and is renowned for developing high-quality health supplements backed by cutting-edge scientific research.

'I thought I had nothing to lose by trying it. The difference it made was unbelievable.'

The key active ingredient in turmeric is called curcumin, but it's hard for our bodies to absorb from ordinary turmeric powder.

So Turmeric+ uses a patented curcuma phospholipid complex formulation with a unique phytosome delivery system to increase absorption. Pharmacokinetics studies show that it enhances absorption by 30 times, in an

innovative and effective natural alternative to black pepper.

It's become the world's most scientifically documented curcumin formulation, featured in 45 human studies involving over 2,000 people. It's also been officially recognised and certified by Informed-Sport.

Turmeric+ delivers the full bouquet of curcuminoids, including high levels of demethoxycurcumin (DMC), the most powerful of all. This is combined with vitamins C and D which contribute to normal function of cartilage and normal muscle function.*

Turmeric+ has received numerous positive reviews since its launch, becoming the company's best selling product. 'I always liked to stay fit. Unfortunately, I began to slow down due to wear and tear,' says Sylvia, a happy Turmeric+ subscriber.

'I thought I had nothing to lose by trying it. The difference it made was unbelievable. I was able to work-out and can now continue with my fitness regime.'

'We're happy to offer people their first pack of Turmeric+ for free so they can experience it

for themselves,' says Adam Cleevely, Chair of FutureYou Cambridge.

'Most people know if it's working for them within four to eight weeks – and if they like it, they will stick with it.'

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR FREE TRIAL PACK

*Just pay £1.50 postage. To claim your free 28 day Turmeric+ subscription trial pack worth £19 visit **FutureYouOffers.co.uk** or freephone **0800 808 5740** and quote the code **TUF283**

*Your first box is free (just pay £1.50 postage) and you will be enrolled into a flexible subscription costing £19 (inc. postage) every 28 days, which you can cancel at any time, without obligation.

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WH PROMOTION

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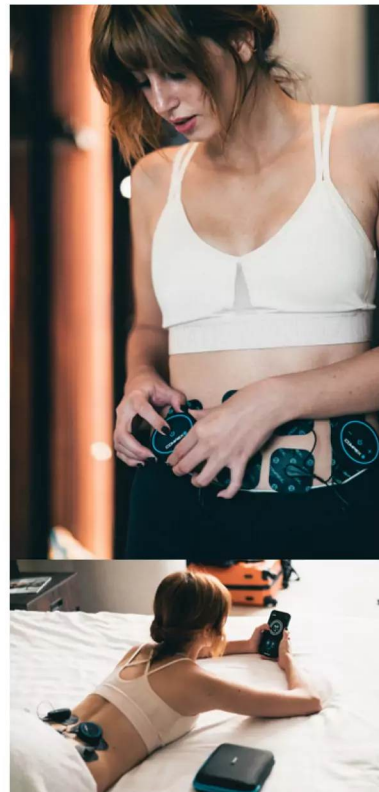


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FITNESS EDIT

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Gemma Atkinson

The broadcaster and host of the podcast *The Overshare*, on adjusting to life as a mum of two and the government policy that could transform postpartum recovery for UK mothers

STATS

AGE: 39

JOB: Radio/podcast host

FITNESS MO: Core-strengthening programme

WIND-DOWN SECRET: Watching Disney+

EMPATHISE

I learn so much from the women I'm lucky enough to have long conversations with on my new podcast. One woman told me how she lost both her children when they were very young, and after dealing with that, she lost her mum. She was so open and brave. She said, 'It's happened. My options are to crumble or to carry on.' I thought, 'What a great outlook.'

CHECK

Before restarting exercise post-partum, I'd advise getting a 'mummy MOT' [a full postnatal medical and physio check-up]. Sadly, it's not available on the NHS. So many issues women have are because they haven't healed the pelvic floor post-pregnancy. It would save the NHS a fortune down the line.

NURTURE

Mia [Gemma's daughter, aged four] is obsessed with being in our home gym – I'll build her a little obstacle course. I don't ever want her to think she has to be a certain shape or



size. It's about teaching her that she can be strong and athletic and it's brilliant to be that way. Throughout the week, we'll eat lots of vegetables, protein and fats; at the weekend, we'll get a takeaway pizza, Maltesers and Haribo. It's finding that balance.

SAVOUR

Gorka [Strictly dancer Gorka Márquez is Gemma's partner] and I love a nice brunch and a really early night. When we do opt for a date night, it'll be the cinema and a pizza. My best friend's turning 40 in a couple of weeks; her party will be my first drink in over a year.

DEPEND

After Thiago was born [Gemma gave birth to her son in July last year], I was fortunate that my mum moved in with me. When Mia started school, my mum drove and I was able to walk her in. She moved out when Thiago was about six weeks. With Gorka away doing *Strictly* rehearsals, there's no way I could have done it without my mum and stepdad. I loved my grandma and granddad when I was little. It makes you realise the importance of a support network after a baby.



EXPLORE

I love going to Bilbao [in northern Spain, where Gorka's family are from]; they're all very laid-back. They have siestas in the afternoon and I love that they sit outside and have coffee in the morning. Mia can count to 50 in Spanish and can say hello, goodbye and ask for kisses. We're in the process of getting her Spanish passport.

WATCH

There was a series I watched in 2015 called *Revenge*. It's on Disney+ and I started rewatching it. I love it. There's an actor in it, Josh Bowman, whom I worked with years ago.

It's a real binge-watch. I also loved the Tyson Fury documentary, *At Home With The Furies*. I don't know how Paris Fury does it with all those kids.

FOCUS

Goals-wise, I'd like to be back to my personal bests in my training, but that won't be until summer. After having Mia, it took 10 months until I was able to return to lifting at the level I was before. Ultimately, my focus is on making more memories as a family during Thiago's first year.

The Overshare with Gemma Atkinson is on Apple Podcasts



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