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Livinia Nixon

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TO HAPPY AT 45





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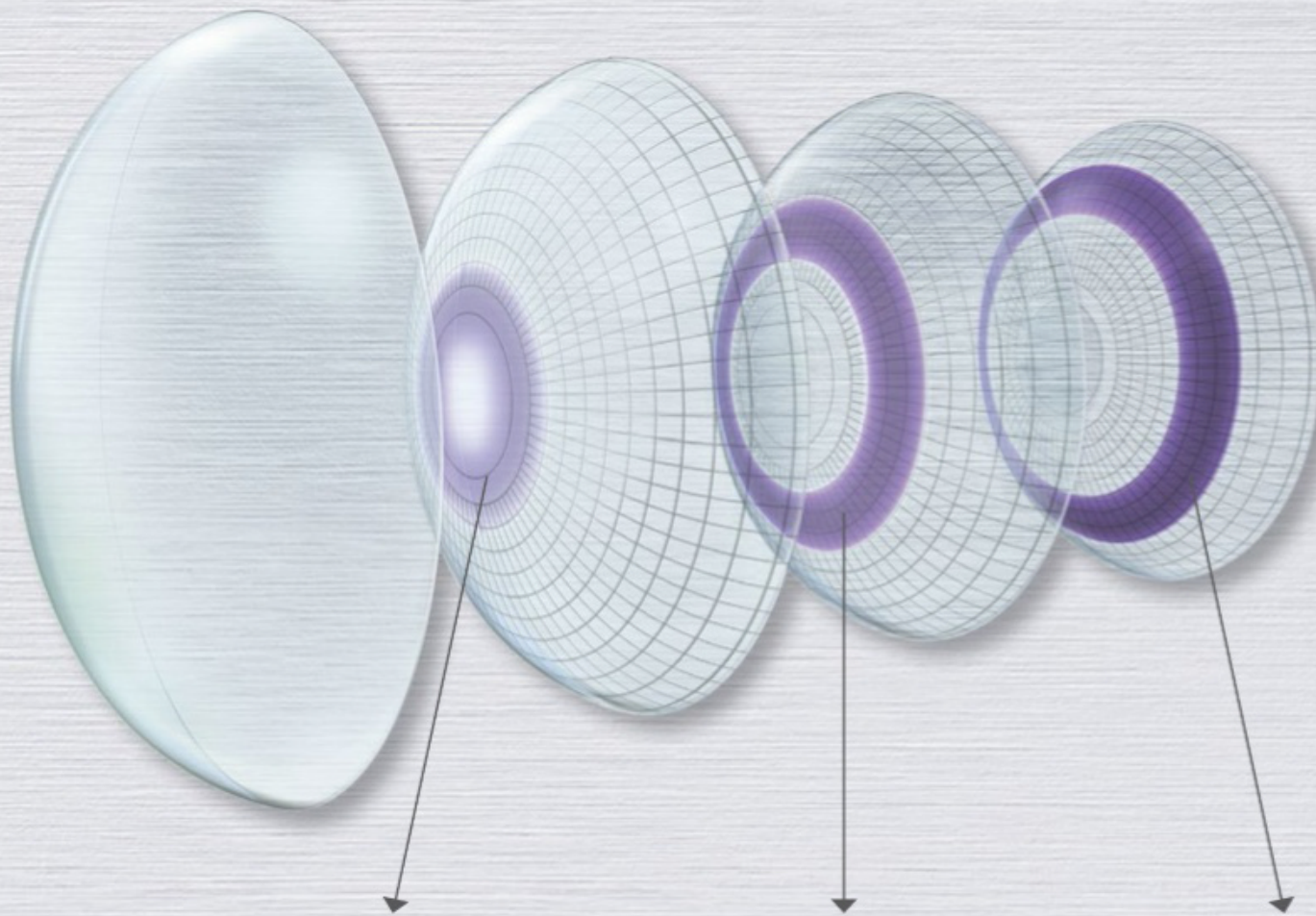
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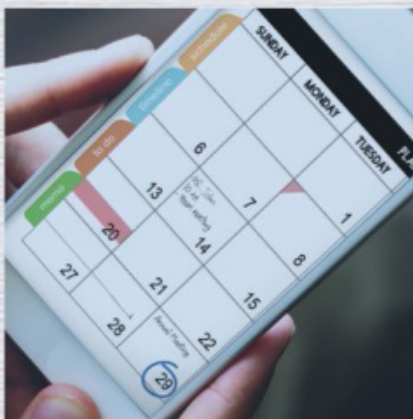
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References: 1. Perez-Gomez I, Giles T. European survey of contact lens wearers and eye care professionals on satisfaction with a new water gradient contact lens. *Clinical Optometry*. 2014;6:17-23 (Sponsored by Alcon). 2. Maissa C, et al. (2014) Evaluation of the Lubricity of DAILIES TOTAL1® Contact Lenses After Wear. *American Academy of Optometry*. Program 145195. (Sponsored by Alcon). 3. Alcon 2016 Multifocal Precision Profile Contact Lens Design (Data on file available on request).

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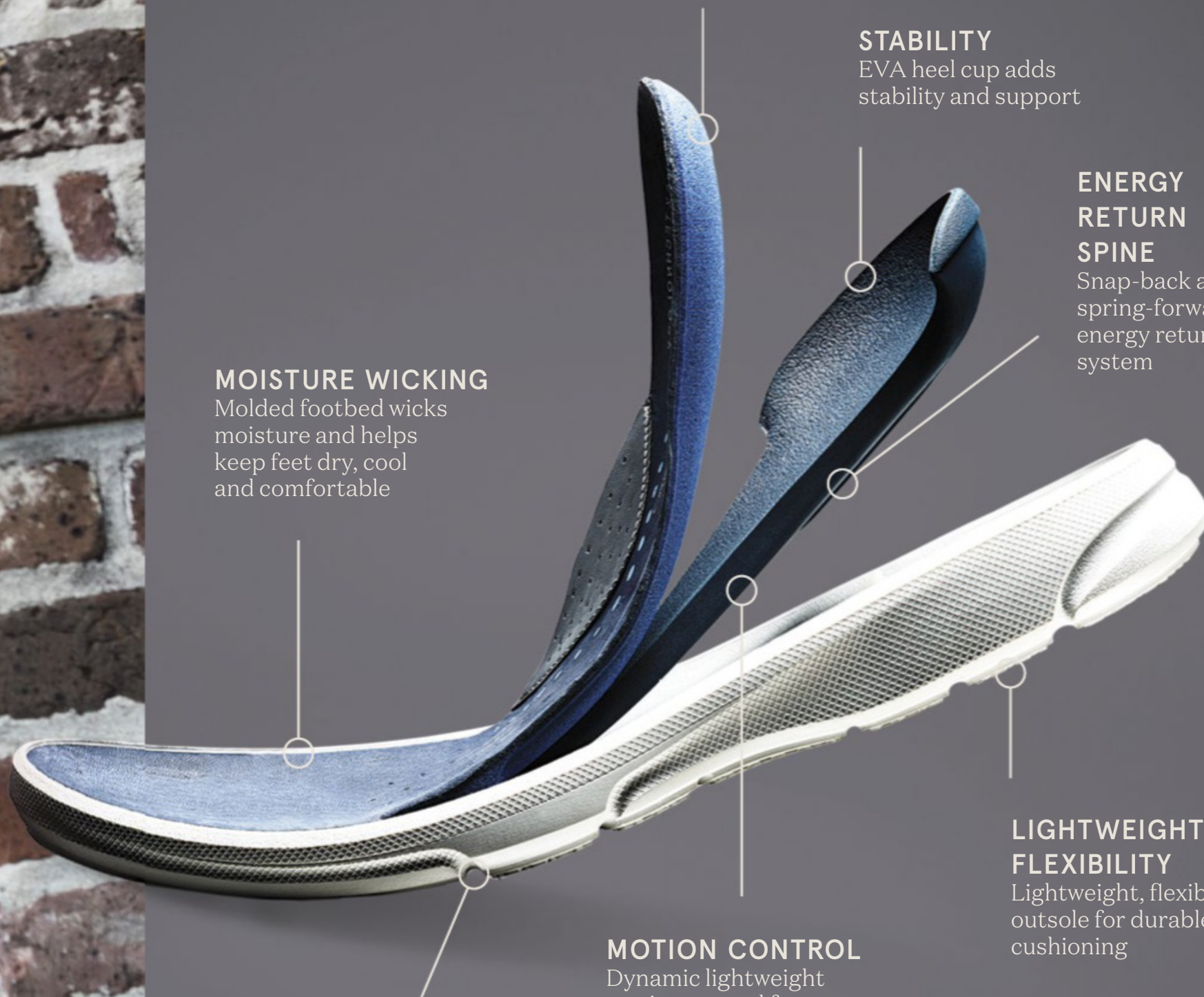
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See page 112



Set yourself a daily challenge!

Do you wake up and say, 'How can I challenge myself today?' Maybe, like me, it's something modest, such as stretching deeper into a yoga pose than you could manage before. But Michelle Lee took this challenge further than most: she decided to row single-handedly across the Atlantic. And she did it – rowing for 68 gruelling days! When Michelle dropped by our office (you will meet her on page 90), her handshake was hard and firm. "This experience has changed me forever," she told me, explaining how daily life on land seems far too humdrum. But the most touching thing she revealed was what she'd learned about herself along the way. What she missed the most at sea was simple human kindness: "Just someone to say, 'Here, love, have this cup of tea.'"

Her story affirms the ability within each and every one of us to rise up and be more, and live richer lives if we dare to challenge ourselves.

Recently, I spent a soothing morning aboard the luxury cruiseship *Seabourn Encore*, trialling their Mindful Living program. It started with what's called crystal sound therapy, where you listen to a hum emanating at a specific pitch from bowls being 'played' – a bit like running your finger around the rim of a glass. Sounds whacky? To my profound surprise, the pulsing tones jettisoned all busy thoughts from my brain. A gentle yoga class followed, and then a calming meditation. I floated off the ship in a state of blissed-out calm.

I've been curious about the *Seabourn Wellness Cruise* program for some time, as it was devised by Dr Andrew Weil, a long-time contributor to *Prevention*, and a founding father of the global movement to integrate evidence-based Western medicine with alternative and complementary therapies.

It's exciting to see the range of new travel/holiday options evolving to enrich us far more than lazing by the pool. Wait until you see the experiences our travel writer Ute Junker has in store on page 114.

Enjoy this issue!


ANDREA DUVALL
EDITOR

what we're loving...



WALKING FOR A CAUSE

We've spent twilight hours after work walking and talking (...sorry, training!) so Team Prevention can take part in the annual 30km Sydney Coastrek walk on March 27, and raise funds for Beyond

Blue. The training's been a special way to be together. You should try it! Check out the annual walks at coastrek.com.au

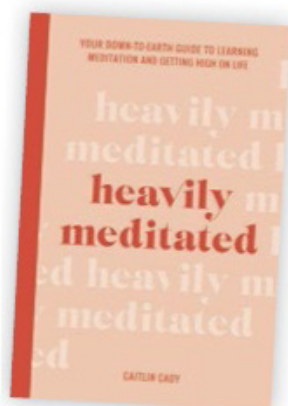


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The new Helios dryer from ghd is built for women like us. It's lighter, extremely powerful and dries hair with 30 per cent more shine. \$290, ghdhair.com/au

HEAVILY MEDITATED

A warm, wise and enjoyable guide for anyone who ever wanted to learn how to get calm, and make it a habit. (Hardie Grant, \$29.99)



A woman with dark hair is seen from the side, sitting in a pool. Her arms are resting on the edge of the pool. The background shows a lush green landscape with a blue sky and distant hills.

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ON THE COVER

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Hair & Make-up Leah Briody

Livinia wears Witchery off-the-shoulder blouse, high-waisted skinny jeans and Ted Baker earrings.

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Over to you

Many of you were keen to share how our last issue inspired you.

THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Kindness and compassion is something I try and instil in my daughters every single day. I was so excited to read that this is how one of my role models, Natarsha Belling, chooses to live her life (Feb/March). She has experienced adversity, with her son getting sick, but kindness and compassion towards others has always been at the forefront. It was also great to read that she has a loving marriage with plenty of heated debates. Funnily enough, I concur that this is the secret to a healthy relationship. It's certainly worked for my marriage!

Julka Cvetkovic, Vic

ADVICE THAT WORKS

I enjoyed reading your Best Diet Guide for weight loss in 2020 (Feb/March). As tempting as fad diets may be, I was excited to see the Mediterranean diet is still ranking high for weight loss. I feel this is an achievable way to eat



Winner!

Last issue's cover star, journalist Natarsha Belling, shared how she lives guided by kindness and compassion – and it struck a chord with readers.

that focuses primarily on health. Thanks for the great article.
Christy Griffith, NSW

TAKE A HIKE

I couldn't agree more with Belinda Jackson's piece, Brilliant Benefits of a Walking Holiday. (Aug/Sept). I really had to dig deep on a trip to Larapinta (NT) and I learnt a lot about who I really am.

Julia Titmuss, NSW

WRITE IN FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN...

NUFACE 'ON THE GLOW' TRAVEL SET

Tell us what you think about this issue of Prevention and the best letter published will win this great prize! Get everything you need for great skin on-the-go with this travel set valued at \$254. It includes:

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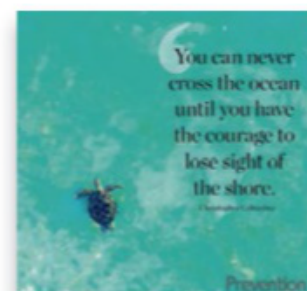
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MOST POPULAR INSTAGRAM PIC

Many of you found this quote from Christopher Columbus inspired you to take that risk!



TOP TWEET

Our easy tips on how to wake up feeling refreshed and raring to go, got you all clicking.



PINTEREST

Lots of you pinned our story on the eight most effective exercises for weight loss.



FAVOURITE FACEBOOK POST

Our 20 low-kJ snacks to curb hunger and lose weight caused quite the stir online – and they're so yummy!





Q SALTY OR SWEET?
43%
SWEET IS A REAL TREAT
57%
NOTHING FAULTY ABOUT SALTY



**you
tell
us**

Here are your views on the questions we asked*

Q HOW MANY CLOSE FRIENDS DO YOU HAVE?

90%

IT'S ABOUT QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

10%

THE MORE THE MERRIER!



Q HAVE YOU EVER HAD BOTOX OR FILLERS?

77%

NOPE - I LIKE MY LINES!

23%

I'LL TRY ANYTHING ONCE!

Q HOW OFTEN DO YOU CRY?

20%

AT WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS, MAX!

80%

IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO OPEN THE FLOOD GATES



Q CARDIO OR FLOW?

39%

GO WITH THE FLOW

61%

CARDIO ALL THE WAY

Pulse

MORE JOY, LESS STRESS - FOR A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER YOU

“The journey
of a thousand
miles begins
with a single
step.

– Lao Tzu



WHY MUSIC MOVES YOU

Find yourself drawn to the punchy rhythms of The Clash's *Rock the Casbah* when needing a pick-me-up or motivation? Or bopping with joy to Ed Sheeran's *Shape of You*? Then it's likely someone on the other side of the world is feeling the same pull. A new US study has found we experience the same emotions universally when we listen to music – from amusement to joy, to motivation and eroticism. Below are other universal feel-good tunes, categorised by mood:

10

The amount of minutes you should cuddle a cat or dog to lower cortisol levels and boost your mood.

SOURCE: WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



Self-soothe with these reads

Seeking refuge from a monkey mind? Rather than reaching for a mid-afternoon snack, take a second to pause and feed your soul some bite-sized wisdom instead. In the new *Love Your Self Series: Calm, Pause, Energy, Sleep* (\$14.99 each, Murdoch Books), you'll find over 200 pieces of wisdom, from positive affirmations, to productivity hacks, sleep-boosting foods and practices that help you take a moment to reset and renew – and each book fits in your bag or back pocket! Keep a copy nearby next time your mind goes into overdrive or, for an instant shift, try this affirmation, "I can always find the peace that is within me."

TUNES FOR... energy



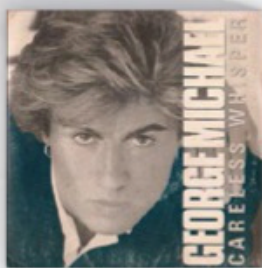
The Four Seasons by Vivaldi.

joy



Somewhere Over the Rainbow from *The Wizard of Oz*.

sexual confidence



Careless Whispers by George Michael, and...



Let's Stay Together by Al Green.

Health

THE BEST BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE, MADE SIMPLE

Catnap for a happy heart

Curling up for a nap has to be one of life's greatest indulgences. Now, thanks to research, it needn't be reserved for a lazy day – it could actually be a way to boost your heart health. A study published in the British journal *Heart* found that napping once or twice a week could decrease the risk of cardiac events, such as a heart attack or stroke, by 48 per cent. The study, which recruited 3462 participants over five years, concluded that further research was needed to determine the optimal length of a catnap. For now, if you're looking to have forty winks, studies suggest a kip of between 25-45 minutes will do wonders for muscle recovery, attention, fatigue and stress.



SHARING YOUR MICROBIOME

The microbiome might be a hot topic in gut health, but it turns out there's more to managing its biodiversity than the food we consume. With microbes living on our skin and in our mouths and gut, not only does what you eat matter, but research now suggests who and what you're exposed to also plays a part. Here's how:

KISSING

We share more than our hearts when we kiss. "Couples with a high kissing frequency share a similar salivary microbiome," says Kelli Proudfoot, Head of Scientific Marketing at Premedy, an Australian health brand.

MONEY HANDLING

Paper currency also provides the opportunity for microbes exchange – with a US analysis finding microbes on dollar bills. "This suggests money itself collects DNA from sources inhabiting the human microbiome, food and other environmental inputs," Kelli says.

FOOD TRANSFERS

Forget the 'five-second rule' regarding food dropped on the floor being safe for up to five seconds because bacteria needs time to transfer. "Some transfer takes place instantly," Kelli reveals.

3

... the number of cups of green tea to drink weekly to lower heart disease risk and lengthen lifespan.

SOURCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PREVENTIVE CARDIOLOGY

Are vitamins worth the money?

Over 8.3 million Australians buy vitamins each year in a bid to better health, but are they all effective? Research suggests maybe not. A recent study reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia* found calcium and vitamin D are of no benefit to those without a deficiency, while calcium could actually result in constipation, bloating and kidney stones – and may increase the risk of heart attack. In addition, combined vitamin B6 and B12 supplements have recently come under scrutiny with a US study finding that taking large daily doses can increase hip fracture risk by nearly 50 per cent. Moral of the story? Check with your doctor.

Lose weight, gain years

Shifting weight after 50 can be no easy feat, but according to the *American Cancer Society* those who do will reap the rewards. A study of over 180,000 women found those who lost weight and kept it off reduced their breast cancer risk – the more weight lost, the lower the cancer risk.



Monday.



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HOT FLUSHES & YOUR HEART

New studies link hot flushes with an increased risk of heart disease. Here, gynaecologist **Dr Lauren Streicher** explains what you can do.





Here's news: Hot flushes last longer than was previously thought – seven to 10 years on average. And emerging evidence shows that they're not harmless but may be associated with potentially life-threatening heart damage. In a 20-year study of more than 3,000 menopausal women, those who had frequent or persistent hot flushes had a dramatic increase in factors associated with heart disease, which may explain why stroke risk doubles in the 10 years after menopause.

Feeling the heat

Every time you have a hot flush, your heart rate and blood pressure increase. In other words, hot flushes make your heart work harder. It also appears that they cause an inflammatory response, which can damage blood vessels. Add to this a hot flush-induced elevation of LDL ('bad' cholesterol), and it's no wonder multiple studies now show that women who have hot flushes are far more likely to have damaged blood vessels than those who don't, even when other risk factors are considered.

This new information may be surprising to women who were advised in 2002 to abandon hormone therapy to avoid an increased risk of blood clots and stroke. That advice was based on the findings of a large study started specifically to determine whether long-term hormone therapy could prevent heart disease and prolong life. But more than 70 per cent of the women in the study were over 60. Since most women go through menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 (representing less than 10 per cent of those in the study population), the overall results reflected women who were well past the hot-flush years (in other words, women for whom any heart damage had already occurred). An evaluation of those in the 50-to-59 range showed different and reassuring results: In women taking hormone therapy, there was actually a decrease in heart disease and overall risk to their lives.



Cool off

So if you're one of the 80 per cent of perimenopausal or postmenopausal women who are experiencing hot flushes and you're concerned about your heart – it helps to lose excess weight, keep exercising, not smoke and eat healthily. But you also may want to rethink the 'tough it out' approach to hot flushes. Since there are safe ways to ease them (see below), there's no reason to suffer – and there are now compelling reasons to reduce the heat.

Take the heat off

Dr Amanda Newman, from Jean Hailes for Women's Health, in Melbourne, reveals the treatments backed by science that you can trust to keep your cool:

HORMONE THERAPIES

"Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) is the most effective way to manage hot flushes," Dr Newman says. "A combination of oestrogen and progestogen, it can be taken in tablet, skin patch or gel form. Alternatively, you can opt for a progestin-containing intrauterine device (inserted into the uterus), or those concerned with vaginal drying can try vaginal oestrogen cream or pessaries (dissolvable tablets inserted into the vagina)."

NON-HORMONAL THERAPIES

"Paroxetine, along with other SSRIs and SNRI drugs (used to treat depression and anxiety) have been found to reduce intensity and frequency of hot flushes," Dr Newman says. "While Clonidine (blood pressure medication) and Gabapentin (anti-seizure medication) are also commonly prescribed for hot flushes and are considered safe." Note: Gabapentin can cause drowsiness.

NATURAL THERAPIES

"There are many alternative products out there, but testing is not as rigorous as prescription medications, so seeking advice from a professional is recommended," Dr Newman adds. **P**





The chocolatey TRUTH

So you know that dark chocolate is better for you than milk, but what about its other perceived health benefits? With Easter coming up, **Stephanie Anderson Witmer** unwraps the truth.

As if the thought of savouring a square (or a whole bar) of dark chocolate wasn't enticing enough, dark chocolate's health claims are pretty appealing, too. We've heard everything: It lowers blood pressure, busts stress, improves cognitive function, protects your skin, and more. But before you eat your way to the bottom of a heart-shaped box, check out what experts have to say about how healthy it actually is.

SWEET BENEFITS

There's been lots of research into dark chocolate, but the hype has outpaced the science. Translation: Dark chocolate won't instantly or directly accomplish any of the above. What is certain is that cocoa is rich in three types of flavonoids – phytochemicals with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant powers that are found in nearly all plant-based foods. This is important because chronic inflammation is linked to conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, metabolic syndrome, asthma, heart disease and cancer.

"These compounds also benefit cardiovascular health by improving blood flow, reducing the risk of clotting, and improving blood pressure levels," says dietitian Whitney Linsenmeyer, PhD. Cocoa is also rich in iron, zinc, copper and magnesium, all critical minerals needed for healthy blood, immunity and cell growth.

HOW TO CHOOSE

Reach for dark chocolate with a cocoa percentage of 70 per cent or higher. (More cocoa equals more flavonoids.) 'Chocolate', 'cocoa' or 'cacao' should appear first on the ingredients list, which means the chocolate contains the most of this by weight. If 'sugar' is first on the list or you see words you can't pronounce, steer clear, or you'll likely be pumping yourself full of empty kilojoules as well as fillers, which negate all the good stuff, says Lisa R. Young, PhD, a professor of nutrition and author of *Finally Full, Finally Slim*.

And pay attention to the label: Dutch-processed cocoa tends to have a reduced flavonoid content because of how the chocolate is processed, while one recent study found that cocoa beans from Colombia had the highest flavonoid content, likely because of plant variety and geography.

SERVING SIZE

There's no magic quantity of dark chocolate you need to eat to get those flavonoids; the dosage used in studies varies. But experts agree that you should treat it like you would any other sweet indulgence and consume it in moderation. "It's best reserved as a treat," Dr Young says. "Yes, it does contain antioxidants, flavonoids, vitamins and minerals, but let's not call it a health food – it still contains plenty of sugar and fat." **P**



FOR MILK CHOCOLATE LOVERS

If 'dark' chocolate tastes too bitter for you, 'dark milk' chocolate is a pretty sweet compromise. It has less sugar and more cocoa than traditional 'milk' chocolate, which may have as little as 10 per cent cocoa. If it says 'milk' chocolate but has a cocoa percentage of 38 per cent or higher, you'll know that it's 'dark milk'. Organic is best, so track down an organic brand of chocolate if you can.

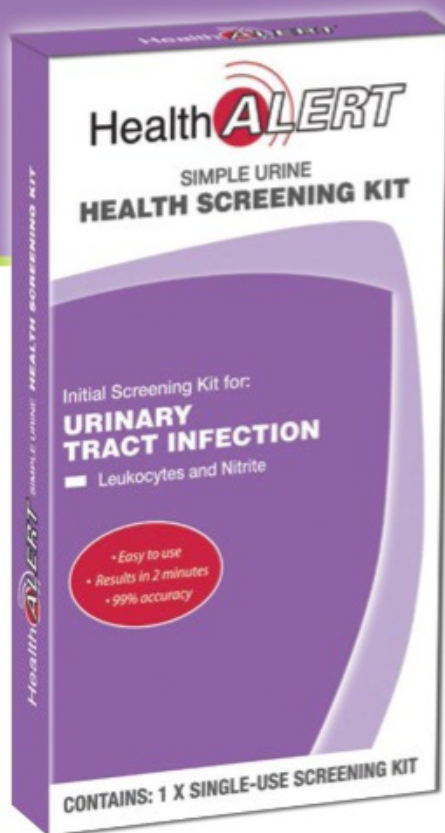


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Fitness

FEELING STRONGER, FITTER AND FIRMER AFTER 40 STARTS HERE

Say hello to slow

If you're looking to keep your stress levels in check and boost brain health, it might be worth opting for a 'cortisol-conscious' workout. Research shows that sustained high-intensity workouts can increase the level of cortisol, a stress hormone, in the body. A new study at The University of South Australia has also found that the 'go-long, go-hard' approach to exercise actually blocks the brain-boosting benefits altogether. By contrast, a sustained moderate pace has been shown to improve brain 'neuroplasticity' – its ability to rewire or modify its neural connections. (HIIT, the technique of short, sharp jabs of high intensity seems good for the brain also). So if you're wondering how your daily walk, swim or bike workout fits into all this, rejoice! You've joined the Low-Intensity Steady State (LISS) movement: that is, working out at an exertion level of 50-65 per cent of maximum heart rate over a prolonged period. Science says those who do a LISS workout enjoy it more, and are also be more likely to keep up the exercise habit long-term. Bye-bye burpees!



130

The steps needed per minute to keep your power walk at a punchy pace!

SOURCE: THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

SWEAT MORE, STRESS LESS

Hot yoga might be just what the doctor ordered to keep blood pressure in check. A study by the American Heart Association found that practising hot yoga (at 40 degrees) three times a week over 12 weeks not only reduced blood pressure but also improved stress levels. While not a foolproof alternative to medication just yet, with winter around the corner, 'saluting the sun' never looked so good.

SAVE YOUR SOLES

How do your shoes stand up? A recent study found that 63-72 per cent of Aussies are wearing the wrong-sized footwear. Wearing shoes that are too small, too narrow or too loose can not only cause corns, calluses and foot pain, but also affect your athletic performance and risk of injury, says podiatrist Jordan Ryder. "Wearing ill-fitting shoes inhibits movement in foot joints, leading to risk of soft tissue injuries, stress fractures or, worse still, pain or numbness," he says. Here are Jordan's top tips for happy feet:

Measure up "Feet change as we age, so have them measured regularly."

Test thumb width "Always allow a thumb width from longest toe to shoe edge."

Go for a spin "Shoes should be comfortable to walk around in and not need 'breaking in'."

Fired up? Forgo the gym

Next time you feel your nostrils flaring in anger, consider skipping the gym. A large international study in the journal *Circulation* found those who overexert themselves when angry or emotionally upset were three times more at risk of a heart attack. While the study said regular physical activity could help prevent heart disease, it recommended "not going beyond normal routine to extremes of activity" when angry or upset.



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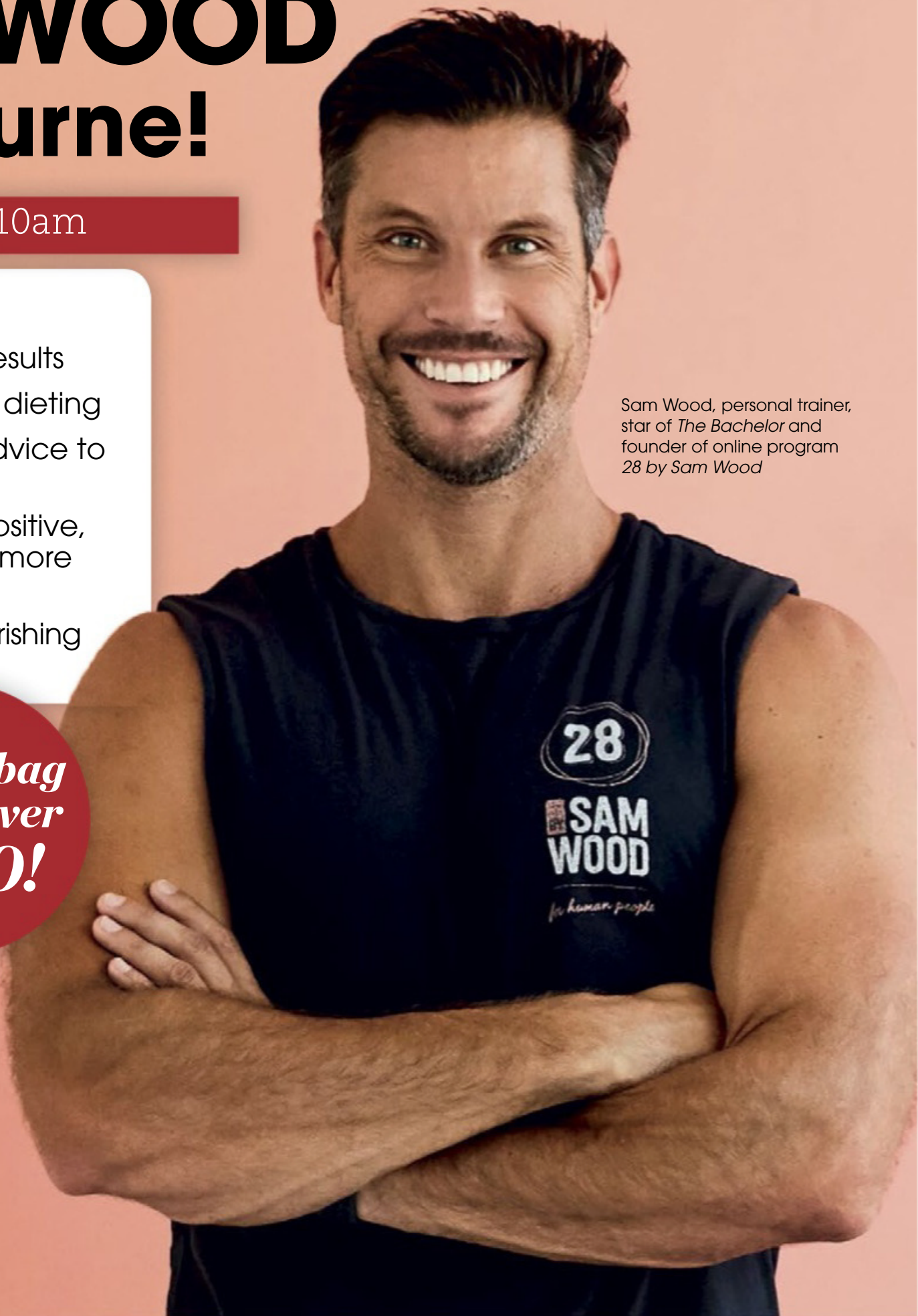
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A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's legs and feet as they walk on a sunlit, gravelly path. The person is wearing blue jeans and blue and green sneakers. The background is a bright, out-of-focus path with sunlight filtering through, creating a bokeh effect. The overall mood is active and healthy.

Did you
know?

*Exercising
is not only
good for your
weight and
heart health,
but it also
improves
your mood.*

You're never too busy to GET FIT

Trainer **Jenna Wolfe** shares three easy ways to stay healthy even when life gets hectic.

You've been enjoying long warm-weather walks, and now the season's changing. Your exercise routine slows way down or comes to a screeching halt. If this has happened to you, don't worry, you're not alone, especially when the darker mornings make for a pretty good excuse to reschedule. Still, hibernating can do a number on your body, affecting your weight, mood, sleep and heart health. Plus, pressing the stop button on your activity means you'll have to start again from square one, and that can be daunting. But what if there was a way to stay motivated from autumn to spring so you could continue to feel great? Let these suggestions challenge and inspire you, and you'll avoid weight gain and tone up.

MAKE OVER YOUR TO-DO LIST

In life, most of us work from two lists: the 'I will do' list and the 'I should do' list. The 'I will' list may include getting up early in the morning, fitting in a trip to the supermarket, folding the washing, filling the petrol tank. Then there's the other list: 'I should' work out, get in my steps, order a salad, just stick with water. The trouble is, we typically do the things on the first list, which won't really help us live longer, healthier, happier lives – but we forgo most of the stuff on the second list, which actually will. My suggestion:

Write down your 'I will' and 'I should' lists. Then move two items off the 'I should' list and

onto the 'I will' list. Start simply with your new 'I will do'. For example: "I will take the stairs, not the lift, when I'm going up three or fewer flights;" "I will have salad for at least one meal every day." Once you get those two habits down, incorporate two more.

2 START A PUSH-UP CHALLENGE

They may seem like an old-school gym class activity, but you get so much from classic push-ups. The exercise works almost every muscle in your body, helping strengthen your chest, arms and core at the same time. So here's your goal: complete 10 to 15 full push-ups a day by the end of two months. Never fear: you can ease into it. Most women don't have the upper-body strength to go right to a full-body push-up, so it's okay to let your knees rest on the ground if you need to.

3 SET A NEW WALKING GOAL

You hear all the time that it's important to get in 10,000 steps a day, but I'm going to offer a different take. Aim for 8,000 steps a day instead. It's simple, easy to fit in and light on your joints – 8,000 steps a day is about 6.4km, which is nothing to sneeze at. Start first thing in the morning to set yourself up for success, then add a few more walks during the day. I suggest using an activity tracker, as you'll start looking forward to seeing that number go up. **P**

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Health-giving herbs

Searching for a punch of flavour without the salt shaker? Say hello to versatile herbs. Not only can they take your dinner from bland to beautiful in an instant, but they're also oh-so-good for you, thanks to their incredibly high content of disease-fighting antioxidants. Here's how – and why – you should add these culinary superstars to your plate.



SAGE is a source of vitamin K, which helps your blood to clot. It works well with roasted chicken, baked pumpkin and pasta.



THYME has a compound called thymol, which is antibacterial. Thyme works well with chicken, sautéed mushrooms and also roasted vegies.



MINT contains monoterpenes, which are believed to delay cancer. Use mint in a simple dressing, as part of a homemade cuppa or to liven up peas.



BASIL boasts curcumin, capsaicin and gingerol, all of which have anti-cancer properties. Basil lends itself to Italian cuisine and works beautifully in pizza, pasta and pesto.



ROSEMARY is rich in polyphenols, which protect against heart disease. It adds delicious flavour to a roast or homemade bread, and also goes well with baked vegies.



PARSLEY provides betacarotene, a compound that is converted to vitamin A in the body and supports eye health. Throw a handful into tabouli, frittata or meatballs.

Take a seat...

If you're prone to eating on the run, here's something to consider. A new US study has found that food actually tastes better when you're sitting down. This is due to posture – standing, even for a few minutes, prompts physical stress, muting tastebuds, according to the study. So, to get more satisfaction from your food, schedule in a little 'you-time' to sit and enjoy each and every mouthful.

30%

That's how much you can lower your risk of hearing loss if you follow a healthy eating pattern.

SOURCE: BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL, US

FOUND! COELIAC DISEASE TRIGGER

Belly bloat is a common symptom of coeliac disease, an autoimmune condition that affects one in 70 Aussies, who have an abnormal reaction to gluten (a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats). Now, scientists in Melbourne have discovered there may be a bacterial trigger in the development of the disease. The human body automatically sends immune cells to fight bacteria – and this latest study has found that in people with coeliac disease, the body is unable to recognise the difference between these bacteria and protein fragments from gluten. This may be a risk in developing the disease, and a cure could be in the works.

Reality check on meat eating

The average Aussie eats nearly 100kg of meat a year, which is more than five times the recommended amount. Yikes! The latest guidelines suggest we should eat no more than 350g of red meat each week – that's a serving roughly the size of the palm of your palm three times a week.

SOURCE: THE HEART FOUNDATION





NOW TRENDING

Spelt

Seeing a lot of health foods boasting they contain spelt? Should you scoop it up? Our dietitian **Melissa Meier** investigates.

***Fast
fact***

Spelt can help reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Devotees claim that spelt – just one of the ‘ancient grains’ currently all the rage in health food products – is more nutrient-dense and gentler on your tummy than plain old wheat. Behind the popularity of ancient grains is the idea that these have been around for thousands of years and are more nutritious than wheat that’s been highly processed to become white flour.

Spelt has a nuttier flavour than wheat, and it’s most often used these days in bread, pizza dough and pastas. In comparison to wheat, it is higher in muscle-building protein. It’s also better for your gut, with over 7 grams of fibre per 100 grams of spelt flour – that’s just under a third of your entire day’s fibre needs. What’s more, spelt is rich in manganese, which is essential for strong bones, and it will even give you a boost of iron to support your immune system, too.

An added bonus, if you suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), is that spelt flour is lower in FODMAPs than regular wheat flour, so some spelt products can be on your menu without uncomfortable symptoms.

So should you be switching to spelt products? While it is an excellent addition to your daily diet, some spelt products come with a rather hefty price tag. So think of wholegrain spelt as being part of the whole wide family of wholegrains that make for good health choices, including oats, brown rice and wholegrain bread. This entire family is associated with a range of health perks, like reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke. **P**



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A JOINT INITIATIVE FOR FRACTURE PREVENTION

Are use-by dates flexible?

Do you often find yourself staring into the fridge, unsure whether to toss the wilting bag of salad leaves or half-used bottle of pasta sauce? Dietitian **Melissa Meier** brings you up to date with date labels.

Confused by the date labels on packaged foods? You're not alone. More than 50 per cent of people report uncertainty around date labels, according to a recent study.

Food poisoning affects 4.1 million Australians each year – so even if you've gambled your luck with questionable leftovers and got away with it scot-free in the past, it'll pay to learn the difference rather than freewheeling your way around date labels. Some foods to be extra cautious of include eggs and egg products, poultry and soft cheeses.

You might be surprised to learn that look and smell aren't the most reliable indicators of food safety – so you shouldn't rely on the sniff test. The compounds that cause signs of food spoilage, like mould and slime, are different to the microorganisms that grow and make food unsafe to eat – but the naked eye (or nose) can't tell the difference between the two, according to Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

It's important to note that once you've opened a sealed packet of food, it will

usually only last for a few days, regardless of what's on the date label. Nonetheless, here's the difference between the two date labels you'll find on packaged food:

Use-by dates are the ones you want to keep your eye on. If you consume food after its use-by date, you're risking your own health and safety. By law, products cannot be sold after their use-by date.

Best-before dates, on the other hand, are a little more flexible. These date-stamps are more concerned with quality, rather than safety. You're more likely to see a best-before date on foods with a long shelf life, like biscuits, canned items and sugar. A product mightn't be at its peak in terms of flavour or texture – but it shouldn't harm you if you eat it past the best-before date.

There is a catch, however: if you freeze something, it'll last longer than what's indicated by the date label. Ultra-low temperatures stop the growth of harmful microorganisms that can cause food to deteriorate, so many foods can stay frozen for several months without spoiling. **P**



**Top
12**

The high-risk foods to keep your eye on are:

- 1 Cooked rice**
- 2 Cooked pasta**
- 3 Meat**
- 4 Poultry**
- 5 Eggs, particularly when raw**
- 6 Seafood**
- 7 Deli meats**
- 8 Fruit**
- 9 Vegetables**
- 10 Sprouts**
- 11 Raw milk**
- 12 Prepared salads – pasta, rice salads**



Foods to fend off **AUTUMN ALLERGIES**

Some people are allergic to spring, while others react to the changes that autumn brings. Here's how to help beat the sniffles.

As the seasons change, welcome relief from the heat, for many, also means the onset of allergies (cue sniffles and watery eyes). Eating the right foods, however, may allow you to sail through the coming months relatively free of symptoms. “What you eat has the potential to not only soothe allergy symptoms, but also prevent allergic reactions from happening in the first place,” says dietitian Jennifer McDaniel. She suggests adding these delicious picks to your allergy treatment plan to start enjoying the outdoors again.

RED ONIONS

When you get a whiff of an allergen like pollen, your immune system releases histamines, inflammatory compounds that trigger allergic reactions, such as itching and swelling. Raw onions, particularly the red variety, are high in quercetin, a flavonoid (a type of plant compound) that helps stop this reaction. “Flavonoids such as quercetin actually block histamines in the body,” says Dr Taz Bhatia, a physician and integrative health expert. Completely worth the onion breath!

Try this Toss ½ red onion, sliced, with 1 avocado, diced, 1 tomato, chopped, and 1 cucumber, sliced. Drizzle the salad with olive oil and lemon juice for a refreshing bite.

BUTTERNUT PUMPKIN

This autumn soup ingredient is an excellent source of vitamin A, which, when obtained from food, can help prevent allergic responses. “Eating vitamin A along with fibre, also found in pumpkin, boosts a part of our immune system called the dendritic cells,” Jennifer says. “These cells regulate how your body responds to allergens.”

Try this For a tasty weekend breakfast, fold ½ cup grated butternut pumpkin and ¼ cup frozen corn into 2 whisked eggs, then pan-fry for light and fluffy fritters. Top with a quarter of an avocado and 20g crumbled fetta cheese.

PLAIN GREEK YOGHURT

Yoghurt is the food that keeps on giving. A review of 20 studies found that probiotics – Greek yoghurt has plenty of them – were linked to improvements in common allergy symptoms like sneezing. “The specific probiotic strains found in yoghurt are particularly effective in safeguarding the immune system,” Jennifer says. These beneficial bacteria can keep toxins and bad bacteria from entering the bloodstream by protecting the lining of the gut. As a result, your immune system is less likely to turn on the waterworks when exposed to an allergen.

Try this Drizzle yoghurt onto pumpkin soup instead of cream. At breakfast, mix it with fresh fruit and cereal, and at dinner, blend it with chopped mint and drizzle onto meat dishes as a healthy alternative to tomato sauce.

GARLIC

It doesn’t just keep vampires away! Garlic contains compounds that may help thin mucus and zap inflammation so you feel less stuffy. It also appears to have antihistamine properties, Dr Bhatia says. A study in the *International Journal of Food Science & Technology* found that garlic may inhibit the release of an enzyme that is associated with allergic reactions.

Try this Coat whole heads of garlic in olive oil, then roast to take midweek dinners from zero to hero. Add roasted garlic to mashed potato, use as a topping on homemade pizza, or blitz through your favourite soup. **P**



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have you heard?

MAKEUP FOR MIDLIFE

Meet Rageism Beauty – the first luxury beauty brand made in Australia designed specifically for 40-plus skin. The range of mineral makeup contains hydrating formulas that are nutrient-rich, cruelty free and vegan. Rageism Beauty offers everything you need to put your best face forward – including a particularly good all-day foundation. Available online and also at TVSN. Discover more by visiting rageismbeauty.com.au.

BANISH YOUR BEAUTY BUGS!

Alarming new UK research, published in the *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, has found a vast majority of our beauty products are contaminated with superbugs, including *E. coli* and *Staphylococci*, that are potentially life-threatening. Sponges used to apply foundation were found to have the highest levels of potentially harmful bacteria – with 93 per cent not having ever been cleaned, despite 64 per cent having been dropped on the floor at some point during use. Protect yourself by practising good hygiene, washing and drying sponges regularly, and paying attention to expiry dates.

LIP SERVICE

Our lips may work hard – all that eating, talking, kissing and laughing – but they also happen to contain some of the thinnest skin on our face. They have no oil or sweat glands, which makes them susceptible to dryness and flaking (bad news for lipstick application). Last year saw a surge in lip-care products, which shows no sign of slowing down in 2020. To perfect your pout and get soft, luscious lips, try our top picks below:

PLUMP THEM UP Dr Lewinn's Ultra R4 Collagen Plumping Lip Masks, \$14.95 for three, drlewinns.com.au

Ten minutes is all it takes for this gel mask to work its magic. Containing collagen-plumping peptides, it improves lip fullness, while reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.



SLEEP ON IT Laneige lip sleeping mask, \$28, Sephora

Wake up after a night's slumber with baby-soft lips, thanks to this moisturising lip mask. It's ultra-hydrating and vitamin-rich with a formula that locks in moisture while you're in dreamland.



KISSY KISSY Mecca Cosmetica Kissable Lips Smoothing Lip Exfoliant, \$27, MECCA

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Cheat sheet PURPLE SHAMPOO

Got blonde, silver or chemically lightened locks? Here's how to stop it looking yellow or brassy.

What is it?

Purple shampoo contains semi-permanent purple dye, designed to keep blonde hair (particularly colour-treated) looking fresh and bright, as well as eliminating yellow tones from naturally silver or white hair.

How does it work?

Through colour correction. Chemically lightened and naturally blonde or silver hair can look yellowy, due to mineral deposits from hard water, damage caused by UV light and heated styling tools, a build-up of old colour or styling products, or your hair's natural warmth coming through. Cool purple tones (think violet and indigo) are opposite to yellow and orange on the colour wheel, so counteract brassiness. They also help restore lost shine, as cooler colours reflect more light than warmer ones.

Who needs it?

Anyone struggling to keep naturally blonde or chemically lifted hair looking clean and bright, though brunettes can also use it to brighten highlights. It's also great for grey hair that has developed a yellowish tinge, for which it's occasionally called silver shampoo.

What else do I need to know?

It can be drying, though new formulations are enriched with high-spec hydrators, such as hyaluronic acid. Using damage-repair or colour-safe ranges and conditioning treatments between purple washes should keep dryness at bay.

Our beauty editor's picks

1. **HASK BLUE CHAMOMILE & ARGAN OIL BLONDE CARE SHAMPOO, \$9, Kmart**
Brightens the blonde, while taming frizz.
2. **JOHN FRIEDA VIOLET CRUSH INTENSE PURPLE SHAMPOO, \$17.99, Chemist Warehouse**
A cooler blonde after just one wash.
3. **GLOW LAB PURPLE SHAMPOO, \$18, Woolworths**
Neutralises yellow and enriches hair with keratin and vitamins.
4. **SCHWARZKOPF EXTRA CARE BLONDE PURPLE SHAMPOO, \$12.99, Chemist Warehouse**
Banishes brassiness and strengthens hair with ease.
5. **ELEVEN AUSTRALIA KEEP MY COLOUR BLONDE SHAMPOO, \$25.95, adorebeauty.com.au**
Counteracts yellow tones while both strengthening and nourishing.

How do I use it?

Carefully. Overuse can leave hair looking dark or dull, while fine hair and more processed areas can grab onto extra pigment – creating stains. Use it once a week if you wash your hair every day, or less often if you wash it less frequently. If the bottle suggests a window of leave-in time, start at the shorter end the first time you use it. If your hair becomes too lilac, use it less regularly or mix it into your usual shampoo. And, as the tips and ends of chemically coloured hair tend to be the lightest, you may only need to apply it through the roots and mid-lengths and let the lather reach the tips as you rinse.

What about purple conditioners?

Because conditioner doesn't lift the cuticle of the hair in the way shampoo does, pigments sit on the outside of the hair, rather than penetrating, meaning the effect only lasts until your next wash.

What if it goes wrong?

If a few washes with regular shampoo don't remove all traces of purple, try a clarifying or detox shampoo, such as O&M Original Detox Shampoo (\$32.95, adorebeauty.com.au) or an anti-dandruff formula like Head & Shoulders Supreme 0% Purify & Volume Shampoo (\$14.99, Priceline). Use it three or four times and then follow with a conditioning hair treatment. **P**





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RRP \$22, marykay.com.au

SEASONAL beauty

From crease-proof eyeshadows to moisturising lipsticks, here's our pick of autumn's most flattering new products.



**SYNERGIE
MINERALS
HYDROBRONZE**

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**SALLY HANSEN GOOD. KIND. PURE.
IN LAVA ROCKS** The brand's first plant-based, 100% vegan nail polish offers 34 shiny shades. **RRP \$16.95, Chemist Warehouse exclusive**

**L'ORÉAL PARIS ROUGE
SIGNATURE MATTE COLOUR INK**
A super-matte lipstick that's long-lasting, lightweight and packed with vibrant pigments. **RRP \$24.95, Priceline**

A gentle lip scrub followed by a hint of lip balm will help your lipstick stay on for longer.



TRINNY LONDON

LIP GLOW Moisturise and plump your lips with these gloss pots, enriched with vitamin E. **RRP \$30, trinnylondon.com/au**

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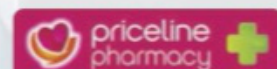
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Monika Rad, former Miss Universe Australia.

Mind

SMART WAYS TO STAY SHARP, CALM AND POSITIVE

Age is all in your mind

Feel young at heart? Then keep on doing what you're doing! It turns out that age really is just a number and staying young could be as simple as adjusting your mindset, according to science. In a new study published in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, researchers found people who felt younger than their chronological age not only showed fewer signs of brain ageing and age-related deterioration, but scored higher in memory tests, felt less depressed and showed increased grey matter, compared with those who felt their age or older. While more research is needed as to why those who live by a 'subjective age' rather than 'biological age' have younger brains, researchers do predict that feeling younger may lead to a more active life, which, in turn, boosts brain health. A rather compelling reason to dance like no-one is watching and savour that next birthday cake.

ADDICTED TO ONLINE SHOPPING?

There's nothing like a little retail therapy every now and again, but if you find yourself clicking 'add to cart' more often than not, it might be time to get serious about your shopping habit. In a new report from *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, buying-shopping disorder (BSD) is now gaining attention as a mental health condition not only with physically going shopping, but also with online shopping. Characterised as "extreme preoccupation with spending and irresistible and identity-seeking urges to possess consumer goods", those with BSD tend to spend as a coping mechanism. Unsure where to draw the line between impulse buying and needing to seek treatment? Here are the key symptoms:

- Immediate pleasure or relief from spending
- Hiding purchases or credit card statements
- Clutter as a result of hoarding
- Being indebted to loved ones
- Lying, deceiving or stealing
- Constant insufficient funds.

Find out more about how the brain gets hooked on page 84



Dream your fears away

While we tend to wake in horror after recalling a bad dream, it turns out there is a more important function at play. A Swiss study has found dreams play a crucial role in helping us process fear in our daily life. The more fear felt in dreams, the less brain activity associated with stress and fear experienced when we're awake.



Did you know?

10

minutes of
mindfulness is all it
takes to memorise
and recall new
information.

SOURCE: MEMORY & COGNITION JOURNAL

Body fat tied to brain power

Carrying a little extra weight around your middle and looking for motivation to shift it? Consider this: a recent US study found losing body fat and increasing muscle mass boosts brain power. Researchers found those in their 40s and 50s with a low muscle mass and high body fat had less 'fluid intelligence' (aka mental flexibility) than those who were lean and with a high muscle mass. With fluid intelligence being fundamental for logic, problem solving and also deductive reasoning, the mental benefits are certainly worth getting into the gym for! What exercise is best? For women, experts recommend doing resistance training to build muscle.

WORDS: SAM BAILEY PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

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HEALTH

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Here's some solid time-off advice. If you've reached the second half of your weekend without socialising, you need to correct that.



MAXIMISE *your weekend*

Do you ever get to Sunday night and feel, “I’m so exhausted! And I didn’t get a chance to do any of the enjoyable things I wanted to do”? Here’s how to have more fun.

Weekends are our happy times. Everything from scientific studies to light-beer commercials confirms this. Which is why it can be so teeth-gnashing to face down a Sunday night – after two days of grocery shopping, housework and washing – thinking, “I didn’t do anything I wanted to do!” It shouldn’t be that way, says Brigid Schulte, author of *Overwhelmed: Work, Love And Play When No One Has The Time*. “Our weekends are uniquely precious, so we have to protect and curate them,” she says. Here’s how:

THURSDAY

Brigid suggests thinking ahead to one thing that will make you really happy – whether it’s reorganising your wardrobe, a few hours of reading time, or going to a family barbecue – and making that your weekend’s ‘tent pole’. Make it doable, but schedule it and commit to it. That way, if you only get one thing done, it’ll be the one you wanted to do most.

FRIDAY

It’s the end of the working week and your desk is still piled with papers. Meanwhile, your brain is so done with the week. This is the time when many of us think, “I’ll just take this work home with me.” Instead, push on through, and don’t let the office follow you out the door. Even just answering an email here or there takes an outsize toll on your weekend, Brigid says. Her best tip: Try to rid your

week of ‘busywork’ so you won’t find yourself in this position to begin with. A third of the work that we do, she’s found, is just to prove to others that we are working!

SATURDAY

Great news. Research says you’re likely to wake up in a cheery mood on Saturday – it’s the happiest day of the week! To keep it that way, try to stay away from the shops. Time-use studies say we think of Saturday as our ‘get-stuff-done day’, so you’ll run into less people if you shift your errands to Sunday, late night shopping on Thursday or Friday night, or almost any other time. And if you do have to hit the shopping centre, “The most fulfilling way to get through must-do tasks is to make them structured, meaning setting clear objectives and time limits,” Brigid says. Endlessly wandering aisles doesn’t qualify.

SUNDAY

If you’ve reached the second half of your weekend without doing any socialising, you need to correct that. Saturdays and Sundays remain enjoyable even as more people have flexible work schedules (meaning, say, Tuesdays off instead of Sundays) because they’re the days we’re most likely to find others to play with, studies say. This is also the day you’ll feel the payoff of finishing that paperwork on Friday. It should help ward off ‘Sunday neurosis’, a creeping anxiety that attacks many workers as the start of the working week approaches. **P**



Date nights
help couples
remember why
they fell in love
– and can also
reignite the
passion.

How to revitalise date night

You know that carving out 'date nights' for just the two of you is healthy for your relationship. But if the idea causes more stress and pressure to your already busy schedule, relationship expert **Rachel Zar** shares how you can get quality couple-time.

SURRENDER DATES

Remember the anticipation that used to go into planning a date? Or the feeling of being wooed? To recapture those feelings, try alternating who takes the lead and who surrenders to the experience. One partner picks everything that happens on the date – such as where you'll go, what the dress code will be, etc – and also handles the details, like organising child care and paying the bill. The other person just goes along with the plan. You can either create a date you think your partner will love, or introduce something you really like to do. Either way, you'll step out of your routine and invigorate your time together.

DOUBLE DATES

Instead of asking each other out, try inviting out those nice new neighbours who live down the street. Research suggests that a couple experiences more passion and excitement after a date when there's another couple along. It gives you the chance to see your partner through the eyes of others – and hear those people's genuine laughter at jokes you've heard a million times.

ADRENALINE DATES

Have you wondered why so many dates on reality dating shows involve abseiling off a building or jumping out of an plane? It really does makes

sense in a way, because the adrenaline rush of taking a risk is similar to that felt when one is attracted to a partner. Incorporating a roller-coaster or an outdoor hike into your next date may give it some added zest.

READY-MADE DATES

Subscription boxes are all the rage these days. From meals to beauty products, they tend to simplify things instantly. So why not do the same with romance? Australian brand Date Crate makes boxes that create an all-inclusive date night for you to enjoy without leaving the house – no babysitter necessary! Or order a gourmet gift box and dine in. By doing a Google search you'll find a myriad of options. You'll also find ones that suit particular interests. (You can buy subscription boxes online that suit every kind of interest – for instance, if you're a crime buff, you can try Hunt A Killer.)

BED DATES

Especially for couples that struggle to find time for sex, a date that happens completely between the sheets offers an opportunity for skin-to-skin contact that may lead to more. Leave your phones in another room and eat dessert in bed. Then play a game (strip poker, anyone?) or opt for a cosy conversation – making a rule not to talk about the kids, the in-laws or finances – and let the night unfold. **P**

HEALTH CHOICES that pay off

By taking these positive steps now, you'll reap rewards for your mind and body later!

By SAM BAILEY

1

CREATE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

“When we take on too much, whether imposed by ourselves or others, we risk causing harm to our physical and mental wellbeing,” says psychologist David Fox from The Relationship Room in Sydney. “It can cause the body to release cortisol and deplete dopamine and serotonin, the two neurotransmitters needed for health and wellbeing.”

HOW TO GET STARTED

By practising the art of saying ‘no’. “If we don’t state our needs clearly, people continue to get their needs met through us, which leads to resentment and anger,” David explains. “By saying ‘no’ and being open, there are no misunderstandings, it keeps relationships intact and increases our self-esteem.” See the box below for his helpful techniques.

2

VOLUNTEER FOR A CAUSE CLOSE TO YOUR HEART

As the saying goes, “What you give, you will get back tenfold.” Charity work is a great way to help others and gain perspective, but now science suggests it will also keep you young. A Belgian study found that people who volunteer are, in fact, as healthy as non-volunteers who are five years younger.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Consider your natural calling. Are you a foodie? Sign up to OzHarvest’s Cooking For A Cause – where you can take part in a cooking class and create meals that feed those in need. Fighting fit? Don a bib for a charity fun run. More of a talker? Get in touch with Lifeline and see how you can donate your time.

3

MAKE SPACE IN YOUR DAY TO REST

Running on empty will only get you so far. Just as your phone needs time to recharge each day, so too do you. Studies show those who take ‘microbreaks’ (5-15 minutes) be it in the form of a funny video, a chat, stroll outside, moment of mindfulness or snack break, are proven to be less stressed, more engaged and naturally more positive than those who don’t.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Dedicate downtime into your daily schedule to recover energy reserves and give your brain a regular break. ►

3 WAYS TO STATE WHAT YOU NEED

Psychologist David Fox shares phrases to keep up your sleeve for when your boundaries feel threatened.

1 AT WORK “I understand this is something you would like me to do. However, I need to show you what I have on so we can decide what I will stop doing in order to do the thing you now want me to add.”

2 AT HOME “I am feeling overwhelmed at the moment. I want to help as I know this is important to you, but I am worried about the stress I am feeling and want to get a few things out of the way first.”

3 AT A SOCIAL GATHERING “I would really like to help, but unfortunately at the moment I cannot take on more than I already have on my plate.”

4 Download a wellness app

INSIGHT TIMER

Soothe your mood with *Insight Timer*, a virtual library with more than 32,000 free meditations that offer everything from timed and guided meditations through to wisdom from spiritual leaders such as Thich Nacht Hanh.

CALM

Tend to toss and turn at night? *Calm* has a Sleep Stories series of carefully curated tales sure to lower stress and have you snoozing in no time. The best part? Actors such as Matthew McConaughey are the ones reading you the 'dreamy' bedtime stories.

GRATITUDE

Power up your positive thinking with *Gratitude*. The perk of this app is rather than you taking time out to 'journal', it will send you a daily text to ask what you're grateful for. Once you reply, texts are saved as virtual diary entries that you can look back at whenever you need a boost.

5

REPAIR A RELATIONSHIP

Is there someone in your life you can't forgive? Let go of the hurt you've been harbouring and clear the slate once and for all. Research shows those with strained friendships are at higher risk of chronic illness, while those with close family and friend ties show greater levels of wellbeing.

HOW TO GET STARTED

By sharing your intentions for the outcome, then setting ground rules, recommends psychologist David Fox. "It can be helpful to call a time-out if emotions are high, or decide to attack the issue at hand, rather than each other." As for the conversation, David says it's important to put your real feelings on the table and allow both sides permission to do this. "Be ready to accept and hold the emotions that may come out, and know, while difficult, the rewards often far outweigh the temporary discomfort."

6

TAKE PART IN A CLINICAL TRIAL

Donating time to science isn't just a noble act – it may help your health and others in the long-term. Clinical trials not only benefit patients and advance medical knowledge but are an alternative way to give back, with over 5.2 million Australians having participated in the past decade alone.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Go to australianclinicaltrials.gov.au or ask your doctor if they know of a trial related to a concern you're dealing with or wanting to prevent.

7

KNUCKLE DOWN ON FINANCES

Find money a source of strain? You're not alone. Studies show financial stress can take a serious toll on the body – increasing anxiety and depression, risk of heart disease and even leading to migraines, physical pain and insomnia.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Carve out time to get serious about finances. Be it consolidating debt, sorting out superannuation or budgeting better, by reducing financial burdens, you'll finally be rid of lingering 'to-do' tasks that can cause stress. If you need support, see a financial adviser or call a trusted friend – then take action.

8

FIND A DOCTOR YOU LOVE

There's nothing worse than dreading a trip to the doctor, or putting off a pap smear due to feeling uncomfortable. A GP should be someone you can feel at ease with. Research shows that those who are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity by their doctors have more positive experiences than those rushed or left feeling helpless.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Begin by listing your wants and needs (Female or male doctor? Young or old? Plain-speaking or sensitive?) Then start researching. Getting a personal recommendation from either a friend or colleague can be a great way to ensure you find someone you can trust.

9

GIVE YOUR HOME AN OVERHAUL

Don't just wait for the first sign of mould to check in on your home's health – instigate a detox now. Studies show there are 45 chemicals in indoor dust alone, and of those, exposure comes with increased cancer risk, plus hormone, reproductive and nervous system disruption. With 60 per cent of indoor dust said to come from outside (via windows, doors and shoes), giving the house a regular once-over just became a health choice, rather than a chore.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Regularly vacuuming surfaces and following up with a barely damp microfibre cloth works best, according to research. Or if vacuuming isn't possible, a damp microfibre wipe followed by a dry microfibre towel works well, too. For any dust particles still present in the air, play it safe by purchasing some new pot plants such as devil's ivy or aloe vera. A study from NASA found both plants naturally absorb airborne toxins (such as formaldehyde and benzene) and help you breathe easier, too.

fun fact

Aloe vera and devil's ivy absorb indoor airborne toxins, making them ideal house plants.

SOURCE: NASA CLEAN AIR STUDY

10

MANAGE YOUR MICROBIOME

It's not just about what you eat, but how it makes you feel. We now know an unhappy gut can lead to an unhappy mood, so, rather than eating habitually, be proactive and fuel your gut with bacteria that will benefit you.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Next grocery shop, look for a quality Greek-style yoghurt that has Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus helveticas. According to research, those who consume both for 30 days show lower levels of anxiety and depression. Meanwhile, women who consume probiotic-rich yoghurt twice a day for four weeks also regulate emotions better than those who don't, according to a US study. **P**





Livinia finds her groove

Livinia Nixon is just as sunny on the inside as her smiling TV persona. Here, she shares how she stays in peak health.

BY ANDREA DUVALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEREMY GREIVE

Let's be frank: most of us rely on a smidge of makeup to get skin that looks like flawless alabaster. For Livinia Nixon, who turns 45 this month, that creamy, glowing skin is all natural. Livinia, who's been the chief weather presenter for the weeknight editions of Nine News Melbourne for more than 15 years – but is known to all of Australia as the girl from *Hey Hey It's Saturday* – is truly ageless. It's easy to put it all down to lucky genes, but that's not so. Truth is, Livinia Nixon is a poster girl for the kind of balanced, healthy lifestyle we all aspire to. So we were curious to know how this mum of two little boys, Henry, 10, and Ted, who turns seven next month, manages to juggle motherhood, a busy TV career (she's been with Nine for 23 years), a happy home life *and* keep her own health and happiness front and centre. Livinia, spill your secrets please! ►



Things don't matter as much as we think. It doesn't matter if the house is a bit dirty and the washing hasn't been sorted.

"If you want to have a work/life balance, you've got to work hard for it, which is ironic. You've got to protect your time, almost verging on being a little bit assertively selfish," Livinia says.

CARVING OUT 'ME' TIME

On a recent Sunday night, Livinia announced to her husband, Alistair Jack, that she was going out to the movies... by herself.

"It was great!" she says of her stolen moment of 'me' time. "I've learned to read the signs that I'm getting stressed. I can feel the anxiety and tension building up in my shoulders and stomach, churning so much it's almost trying to talk to me. And I know what my stress relievers are." She then shares some useful tips:

- "Just having some time on my own. Even if you can't get out of the house, just having a bath is so nice. It's got to be piping hot, and I throw in some Epsom salts for relaxing my muscles.
- "Exercise – even if it's the last thing I feel like doing – is such a great endorphin release.
- "Things don't matter as much as we think: it doesn't matter if the house is a bit dirty, and if I haven't had time to sort out the washing when it's dry. I'll say to the kids, 'Let's all get dressed off the rack,' which means putting on the clothes that aren't ironed yet."

She also guards her time spent out of the spotlight. "I get a lot of invites to things, and when I look at them, I always imagine it's that night, and then I decide if I want to go. "When you get invited to things six months out, you think, that sounds great! But when it rolls around, you're exhausted, you just want to go home, you want to have dinner with your children and

tuck them into bed. So I always pretend it's that night, and I do end up saying 'No' to a lot of things."

THE ART OF DAILY LIFE

When Livinia's alarm goes off around 6am, she launches into a whirl of activity. "I get up early, creeping around the house, trying to do a little bit of washing, get breakfast ready, do lunch boxes. And if I have a busy day, I'll have to do dinner before 7am. (Being on air each night at 6pm means she's home well after the kids have their dinner.) "Sometimes I think to myself, 'I don't know if this is good, or *really* depressing!' " she says.

"I don't love cooking; I find it's just another job that I have to do. But I am very conscious that, as a family, we need to eat well. So I have a whiteboard and on the weekend I'll write down what meals we are having Monday to Friday... again, that's kind of depressing!" she laughs.

Fitness comes after school drop-off, and it's something she approaches with a similar efficient mindset. "If you make a dentist appointment, you turn up. So by making a fitness 'appointment' with myself, I try to honour it," Livinia says. "I'll either head to my golf clinic, try to squeeze in Pilates or a yoga class, or I'll play Cardio Tennis. I play every Monday morning, which I *love*! The music is pumping and it doesn't really matter if you hit balls in or out. When I get in the car at the end of it, I'm a beetroot," she says with relish.

After exercise, her working day begins, maybe a photo shoot, filming, recording voice overs for segments on *Getaway* or *Postcards*, MCing an event, then into the studio for the 6 o'clock news. "Then I'm home by 7.30 to catch up on everyone's day." ►

Livinia smiling through the years



HEYDAYS OF HEY HEY

Livinia as Daryl Somers' sidekick on *Hey Hey It's Saturday*. "I owe so much to Daryl. No-one knew who I was, but he took a punt on me."



NEWSBREAK

Chief weather presenter Livinia, on the set of Nine News Melbourne with sports presenter Tony Jones (left) and newsreader Peter Hitchener.



KIDS' BOOK AUTHOR

Signing copies of her children's book, *Henry's Pirate Adventure*, written for son Henry. It was listed by the Children's Book Council.



WITH HER 'BOYS'

Even as a teenager, Livinia knew that she wanted to have sons. Here she is with husband Alistair and sons Ted and Henry.

You've got to challenge yourself – you've got to push yourself out of your comfort zone.

NURTURING GOOD HEALTH WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

"I'm a big believer in acupuncture stimulating 'chi' [life force] to get rid of stress. My mum studied Chinese medicine in her 40s and we would go and see the Chinese doctor at the change of the season, because that change in the environment affects the foods you should eat and impacts your body. It's a different mindset: It wasn't about going to a doctor when you're sick; it was about going to a doctor to maintain your health. And I still do that now. I go to see a Chinese doctor at the change of seasons, and I go to a natural therapies centre, which does acupuncture and [dispenses] Chinese herbs, probably once a fortnight."

Acupuncture helps calm Livinia's busy brain. "As a working mum, you're constantly thinking three steps ahead. It's draining! And it also adds to your anxiety levels. After an hour of acupuncture, you walk out of there, and it's bliss. That re-sets me as well." As for her clever mum? "My mum is in her 70s now, she does yoga every day, she goes canyoning, which I just... whoa! She doesn't let anything stop her. I'm not that extreme!"

SCORING CAREER GOALS WHEN YOU'RE IN A COUPLE

"My husband, Alistair, and I have learnt that it's really hard for us both to go hard in terms of our careers at the same time. When Henry was born, Alistair [a builder] was really busy, I was working on *Hey Hey* and doing the [weather on the] news. We both just kept working as though we didn't have a child! After a couple of years, it just got too difficult. We decided we'd only have one person going really hard at a time, so he took his turn and I stepped back a little bit, and then he stepped back and I started going really hard. We just sort of worked out this balance."

Before Livinia was swept up into the *Hey Hey* universe with host Daryl Somers, she was a model, most known for her performance in a high-profile ad for Physical skim milk in 1995. In those days, Livinia says, "I was very shy. I hardly said two words."

Her modelling career foundered on a trip to Japan: "I lived in Japan modelling for two months and I was a *butterball*! Who comes back from Japan fat, honestly?! All that sushi – I ate for Australia!"

In 1997, Livinia launched her TV career, initially hosting an afternoon children's show called *Plucka's Place* before replacing Jacki MacDonald on *Hey Hey It's Saturday* until it was cancelled in 1999.

Of that time, Livinia says, "We would have so many laughs hanging out together before the show. That probably was the highlight for me – the camaraderie between everyone, and the jokes! There's a real energy you get from hundreds of people standing there and cheering. And you kind of feed off that energy. That in itself is unique; I haven't felt that since."

So what happened to the shy girl who couldn't speak up? "Like everything, you've got to challenge yourself – you've got to push yourself out of your comfort zone. I think it just brought out another side of me earlier."

AGELESS ENERGY

In the intervening years, Livinia's career has seen her hosting the drive shift on Melbourne's Nova 100 with Ed Phillips, hosting a revamped version of *Sale of the Century* called *Temptation* with Ed for four years, and jetting around the world to report for *Getaway*.

Along the way, she's also become wiser. Asked what advice she'd give if she could go back 20 years and talk to herself, "I'd probably say, 'Loosen up, sweetheart!' "I think you're so worried when you're 24, thinking, 'What am I doing? Am I going to get married? Where is my career going?' I just bought a house when *Hey Hey* was axed so I really felt I'd had the rug pulled out from under me... [now I know] there's always bumps in the road, but that was probably an unsettling time."

Are there ever times when she thinks, 'Gosh, I'm almost 45, how did I get here?' "No, I never think that! For starters, I don't have time to sit down and think about it. I'm really happy with where I am in life. I've ticked a few of the boxes I really wanted to. I really wanted to write a book, so I wrote a couple of books and that was really satisfying [*Henry's Pirate Adventure*, based on a character she created for her son, Henry, and the educational weather kit, *Livinia Nixon's Discover the Weather*]. And I wanted to become a mother, and I've done that. I feel like I have a lovely relationship with my children and a lovely relationship with my husband."

You could say that, right now, Livinia is sailing through calm, happy waters. The weather forecast ahead looks fine indeed. **P**

5 minutes with Livinia

Her happy place

"Being on the beach at sunset."

Favourite exercise

"Cardio Tennis."

First thing on getting up each day

"I always start the day with a glass of water and lemon, just to get the digestion moving."

Last meal "Today, I had Cruskits with tomato, goat's cheese and smoked salmon... and then I ended up eating Henry's cheese toastie!"

On keeping energy up when you're on air at dinner time

"When you open my desk drawer, it's full of pens and this whole buffet of snacks – there're packets of miso soup, popcorn and I've always got nuts and dried apricots."

What she'd say to her 21-year-old self

"Loosen up, sweetheart!"

Top travel tip "I always take a few shower caps to wrap my shoes in, because when you're traipsing around a foreign city all day, your shoes get filthy."

Finish this sentence, 'When I'm 70 I want to be...'

"Happy. And healthy – that's the big one!"



Discover the science of SLEEP

A third of your life is spent in the snoozing state, or at least in bed trying to reach it. Understanding how sleep works can help you get more rest – and get all the health benefits that come with it!

BY MERYL DAVIDS LANDAU

THE BASICS

Remember when you used to brag about working a full day after a night of partying, because who needed sleep anyway? Actually, we all do. Shut-eye is as crucial to our wellbeing as eating a healthy diet, exercising and not smoking, says sleep disorder specialist Dr Afifa Shamim-Uzzaman. Most adults need at least seven hours (more than nine if we're sick or trying to catch up). Yet 40 per cent of Australians experience some form of inadequate sleep. Skimping is serious, though, since it boosts our risk of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, depression, weight gain and even death, not to mention that it's hard to think or function when you're exhausted. Quality is also key, because broken sleep disrupts the regular cycles that heal cells and weed out nonessential memories throughout the night. "So many systems in the body are impacted by sleep," which affects immunity, metabolism and more, Dr Shamim-Uzzaman says. Here's how you can get the most from the time you spend in bed.

While you were sleeping

Here's what goes on in your body when you're in lights-out mode:

THE BRAIN

The first third of the night is spent mostly in N3, or deep sleep, which, along with REM, is important for storing memories and pruning useless thoughts – so 'sleeping on a problem'

does help you gain clarity. In fact, your brain is probably the biggest beneficiary of snooze time, says neurologist Dr Mark Wu, PhD. In recent years, scientists have also discovered a new brain pathway, labelled the 'glymphatic system', that removes excess proteins, fluids and other waste from the brain and spinal cord – a possible reason Alzheimer's is more common in those who don't get adequate sleep.

YOUR EYES

We spend a quarter of the night in REM sleep, during which all muscles relax except the heart, lungs and eyes. Why our peepers stay active isn't known, but one theory is that we've adapted this way because if danger rockets you awake, ready-to-go vision could save your life.

YOUR MUSCLES

In N3, growth hormones are secreted, and they play a role in repairing and building muscles. This is a main reason that athletes consider shut-eye an important part of their training, Dr Wu says. While muscles function normally during much of the night, the fact that they are immobilised during REM means you won't act out aggressive dreams and punch your partner!

SKIN

A study of 60 women in the US found that getting too little sleep made them look older, and weakened the skin's external barrier, which keeps water in and bacteria out. Skimping may also alter the production



The four stages of sleep

The typical stages of snoozing are **N1** (barely dozing); **N2** and **N3** (light sleep and deep sleep, also called slow-wave sleep); and **REM** sleep or dreaming. REM stands for 'rapid eye movement' because your eyes remain active while most of your other muscles relax.

of collagen and accelerate its breakdown, says dermatologist Dr Noelani González.

THE HEART

Your heart beats all night, of course, but by early morning coronary arteries are at their stiffest. Unfortunately, this is when blood pressure and heart rate both increase – the mismatch is one reason heart attacks are more common in the morning.

HORMONES

The hunger hormone ghrelin, which drops naturally at night, and the satiating hormone leptin, which stays high, can't regulate your appetite when you're not rested, which may be why sleeplessness leads to overeating and weight gain. Having proper levels of thyroid stimulating hormone also requires good slumber.

DIGESTION

While you sleep, saliva production drops from 0.5ml per minute to nearly zero, and you swallow one-fifth as often, which may explain dry mouth and morning breath. Too little moisture is a problem if you're prone to reflux, as less saliva gives your pipes less protection when acid backs up. Digestion also slows, along with muscle contractions in your intestines that push food through.

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

During slow-wave sleep, your body ramps up production of a substance called cytokine that boosts immunity. "You're more likely to get sick if you haven't slept well," says Dr Shamim-Uzzaman. Vaccines are also aided by slumber: In one study, people who were kept up the night after a shot had half the immune response of those who slept. ►

Dozing disorders

See your doctor if you suffer from these night-time symptoms:

SNORING AND GASPING

Sleep that's interrupted by snoring and gasping for breath means there may be obstructions in your airway. If your pillow partner says you do this, don't blow it off because, aside from making you feel worn out the next day, apnoea can lead to heart disease or diabetes.

RESTLESS, TINGLY LEGS

Now also known as Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) or Willis-Ekbom disease, this uncontrollable urge to move the legs (or a creeping, tingling or burning sensation) is frequently caused by a neurotransmitter defect. Your doctor may suggest dopamine regulators, iron and/or sleep meds.

TEETH GRINDING

Gnashing, grinding or clenching teeth, sometimes brought on by stress, leads to headaches and jaw problems, as well as damage to your pearly whites. A mouth guard or Botox injected into the jaw can protect you, and biofeedback or anti-anxiety meds may stop the urge.

RANDOMLY FALLING ASLEEP

In this uncommon condition, a 'sleep attack' can happen at any time, causing you to conk out even while exercising or – dangerously – driving. Sufferers also suffer sudden muscle weakness.

Insomnia

Most of us have bad nights, but chronic insomnia is a disease. Insomnia is when you regularly can't fall asleep, stay asleep or slumber until a reasonable hour, due to anxiety, depression, pain or when your sleep cycles are out of whack because of travel, night work or even hormonal fluctuations. There's also 'learned' insomnia, in which prior nights of tossing and turning have you convinced you won't be visited by the Sandman and the resulting anxiety makes it a self-fulfilling prophecy. Putting away your devices an hour or two before bed is a good idea, as is winding down by taking a soothing bath. On the opposite page are a few more tips on how to fall and stay asleep. If none of them work for you, then cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), in which you learn to think differently about your sleep trouble, has been recognised as an effective treatment.



Another reason to catch more Zzzs

People who sleep seven to eight hours most nights are less likely to feel anxious, according to studies. Set aside time to relax, meditate or exercise, which can help ease anxiety.



Why you remember your dreams

Dreams happen during REM, after which you're supposed to cycle back to the N2 and N1 stages, says Dr Shamim-Uzzaman. If your alarm goes off mid-REM, you're more likely to recall what you dreamed.

YOUR BRAIN ON EXHAUSTION

When you're tired, judgement, memory and creativity become impaired, and your reflexes can slow down as if you're drunk. This helps explain why around 20 per cent of all fatal car accidents in Australia are attributed to tiredness. Much of the decrease in our ability to think happens because we slip into the odd state of 'local slow-wave sleep', which is when we appear to be awake but part of the brain is snoozing, Dr Wu says. Mental illnesses can also worsen with – and maybe even be caused by – not getting enough sleep, experts say. Scientists used to think it was depression or psychosis that kept sufferers awake, but now they believe the neural networks of normal sleep and mental health are intertwined. Stabilising sleep in people with, or vulnerable to mental illness, can break this cycle, says Russell Foster, a British professor of circadian neuroscience at the University of Oxford.



Common SLEEP STOPPERS



BATHROOM OR HALLWAY LIGHT

Light increases your alertness, so brush your teeth and scrub off makeup in semi-darkness. And if you get up at night to pee, don't flick the light on.



ALCOHOL & NICOTINE

Because booze is a short-acting sedative, while you may crash, you'll wake when it dissipates after a few hours. (Liquor also worsens apnoea.) And while a nightly smoking ritual might feel relaxing, nicotine actually revs up your brain.



TOO MUCH TV

Watching more than four hours of evening telly can make it tough to sleep, a study in medical journal *Psychiatry Research* recently found. And watching upsetting news late at night can be anxiety inducing.

Surprising SLEEP SAVERS



PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Tensing and releasing each muscle group calms the mind and puts muscles into the mellow mode they experience as you enter the N1 stage. And focus on your breath – inhale, exhale; repeat. “Doing this redirects the part of your brain that wants to stay active,” says sleep specialist Dr Nancy Collop.



HYPNOSIS

“You are getting sleepy” isn't just a stage act. In a review of 24 studies, more than half found that when insomniacs put themselves into a trance, it helped them sleep. A phone app like *Sleep Well Hypnosis* will bring the hypnotist right to your nightstand.



PRUNES BEFORE BED

Their magnesium, B6 and calcium help produce melatonin, a hormone that makes us sleepy. Eat two or three about an hour before lights-out. More may have you running to the bathroom instead of to bed, says Lauren Harris-Pincus, a registered dietitian and author of *The Protein-Packed Breakfast Club*. **P**

DROP 5kg *and keep it off!*

Look and feel healthier with our easy five-step diet reset.
You'll soon be bouncing with energy!

You know that being at a healthy weight is good for your heart, joints and overall wellness. It may also help you sleep better and give you more energy. Plus, eating the right balance of whole, fresh foods may even ease anxiety, making you feel calmer.

Let's start off on that journey with a simple five-step diet reset. This isn't a fad regimen – these are simple tips that will lead you to a positive, holistic lifestyle change. Not only will your body be leaner, but you'll also strengthen your health and wellbeing from the inside out. ►



Store
crunchy fresh
vegies on shelves
in the fridge so you
can't miss them
when you open
the door.

STEP
1

GET SET FOR SUCCESS

TEMPTATION-PROOF YOUR KITCHEN

Start by tossing the treats you simply can't resist overdoing – whether that's biscuits, ice cream, chips or soft drinks. In the pantry, stash healthier fare you want to eat only in moderation (nut butters, healthy muesli bars, popcorn, etc.).

KEEP HEALTHY FOODS IN SIGHT

Put a big bowl of fruit on the counter, store fresh vegetables on fridge shelves instead of hidden in the crisper, and pour whole grains and dried beans into clear jars so you can't miss them.

HAVE **GOOD-FOR-YOU** SNACKS AROUND

Grab a handful of raw nuts or fresh berries, and satisfy your sweet tooth with a couple of dates stuffed with almonds.



MAKE **BREAKFAST EASY**

Cereal or muesli can be an excellent choice for a nutritious breakfast. You're looking for:

- made with wholegrains
- at least 5g of fibre per 100g
- less than 15g of sugar per 100g



CONCOCT A **BACK-UP PLAN**

We all have nights when we're too tired to cook. Stock your kitchen pantry and freezer with ingredients you can transform into a fast meal – chicken breasts in the freezer for easy defrosting, frozen veg, and microwaveable rice cups in the pantry. Then you can pull together a healthy chicken fried rice like this (left), faster than you can summon Uber Eats.



STEP

2

Shake up the rules

EAT ONLY WHEN THE SUN'S UP

Research suggests that allowing at least 12 hours between dinner and the next day's breakfast may help speed up weight loss. Fasting may let you burn through unneeded fat stores faster, or improve the body's ability to use insulin.

Have dinner earlier, or
breakfast later
– or both!

STEP

3

Pick foods that fill you up

Make VEGETABLES THE FOCUS OF YOUR PLATE

Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, such as asparagus, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, mushrooms, eggplant and carrots. Then divide the remainder of the plate in half and fill each quarter with a serving of lean protein and fibre-rich complex carbohydrates.

Choose CARBS IN THEIR NATURAL FORM

Eat at least four daily serves of minimally processed, fibre-rich carbs, such as wholemeal pasta, grainy bread, brown rice, quinoa and rolled oats. That's as easy as eating 1 cup of wholegrain cereal for breakfast and ½ cup of brown rice with a nutritious dinnertime stir-fry.

Work APPETITE-CURBING PROTEIN INTO EVERY MEAL

Let protein help you stay feeling full for longer – think salmon, tuna, prawns, chicken breast, tofu and eggs. And don't forget to include legumes for an instant protein fix. Fold lentils into rice, black beans into quinoa, or chickpeas or cannellini beans into a healthy vegetable soup. ►

STEP

4

Think ABOUT PORTIONS

Here are some healthy, handy hints to make sure you don't overdo it.

FLIP YOUR DINNERWARE

Serve your dinner on side plates and use dinner plates for salad.

For drinks, use your smallest glasses if you're having juice, and your biggest glasses for water.

These strategies work by tricking your eyes.

Fast fact

Pasta, rice and potatoes that have been cooked and then cooled develop resistant starch – a type of fibre that has a prebiotic effect.



RIGHT-SIZE YOUR SNACKS

Serve nuts in a shot glass, popcorn in a coffee mug, cereal in a teacup and muesli in a ½-cup ramekin. That will help you make sure your snack doesn't become a fourth (or fifth!) meal.

BE FASTIDIOUS ABOUT **FATS**

Even healthy oils like olive oil contain 500kJ (120 calories) per tablespoon. Measure cooking oils by the teaspoon, rather than pouring straight into the pan. Also measure nut butters, like peanut butter, before spreading.

STEP 5

DRINK SMART *Not* SUGARY

Hydrate right

Whether you choose still or sparkling water, drinking more of it can help you eat less. For a flavour kick, spike your water with fruit and herbs, like strawberry and basil, grapefruit and thyme, or blackberry and tarragon.

Watch that latte

The milk in your coffee can add hundreds of unwanted kilojoules (500-600kJ for a regular-sized cup with full-cream milk). Trade up to a large cup and you'll drink in almost 1200kJ. Sugar and sugar-filled

syrops also add hundreds of hidden kilojoules to a cup of coffee. Stick to a regular serve with skim milk and you'll save 150kJ. If you're after a bigger caffeine fix, opt for a double-shot, rather than a double-sized cup.

Rethink juice

Fruit juice has vitamins and minerals, but also packs a load of sugar and kilojoules. Try a green juice made with naturally low-sugar vegetables, like spinach, kale, cucumber and celery, with a splash of fruit juice for half the kilojoules and a third of the sugar. ►

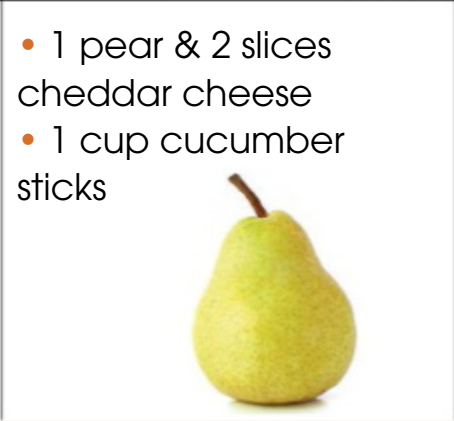
Concoct refreshing mocktails by infusing sparkling water with slices of fruit, herbs and lots of ice. Cheers!



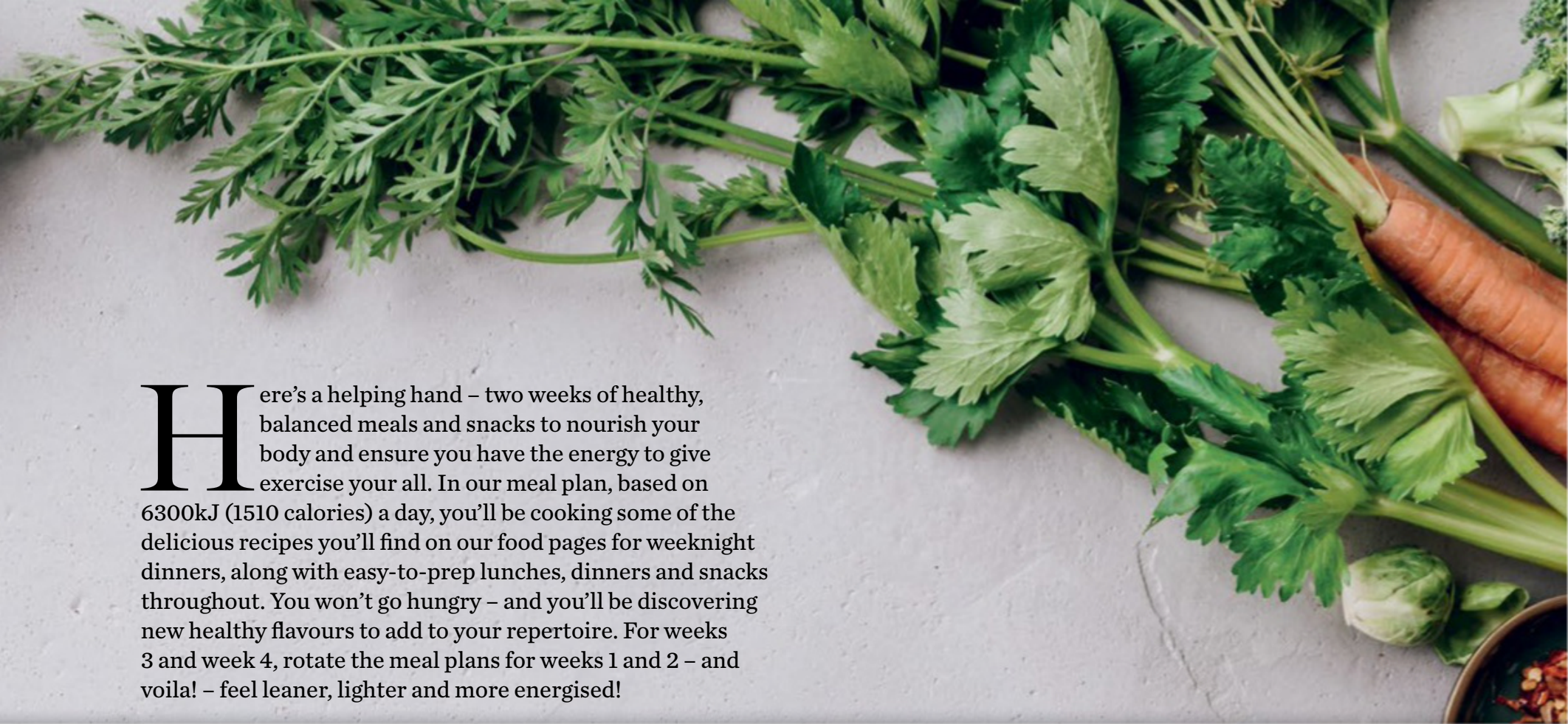


Healthy re-set MEAL PLAN

1
Week

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Avo toast 2 slices soy-linseed toast topped with ¼ avo & chilli flakes. Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 banana	Muesli & yoghurt ½ cup natural muesli, 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt + 2 kiwifruit	Vegie omelette 2 eggs, ½ zucchini & 10 cherry tomatoes, topped with 20g fetta cheese + 1 skim latte
LUNCH	Chicken salad 100g skinless barbecue chicken breast, 1 cup mixed leaves, ½ cup chickpeas, ½ cucumber & 10 cherry tomatoes, with 20g fetta cheese & a drizzle of balsamic vinegar	Leftover Tuna pesto pasta salad, p126 	Open sandwich 1 slice soy-linseed toast topped with ¼ avocado, 1 x 95g can tuna (drained), 1 sliced tomato a handful of sprouts & 20g fetta cheese + 1 apple
DINNER	½ x Tuna pesto pasta salad, p126 (save leftovers for lunch tomorrow)	Pea & fetta fritters with labneh, p132 	½ x Green bean & lentil salad with dried figs, fetta & herbs, p132 (save leftovers for lunch tomorrow)
SNACKS	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 passionfruit • 1 cup carrot sticks & 1 tbs tzatziki • 1 hard-boiled egg	• 1 pear & 2 slices cheddar cheese • 1 cup cucumber sticks 	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 passionfruit • 2 cups plain, air-popped popcorn





Here's a helping hand – two weeks of healthy, balanced meals and snacks to nourish your body and ensure you have the energy to give exercise your all. In our meal plan, based on 6300kJ (1510 calories) a day, you'll be cooking some of the delicious recipes you'll find on our food pages for weeknight dinners, along with easy-to-prep lunches, dinners and snacks throughout. You won't go hungry – and you'll be discovering new healthy flavours to add to your repertoire. For weeks 3 and week 4, rotate the meal plans for weeks 1 and 2 – and voila! – feel leaner, lighter and more energised!

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Avo toast (see Monday) 	Muesli & yoghurt (see Tuesday) + 2 kiwifruit	Veggie omelette (see Wednesday) + 1 skim latte 	Café-style breakfast 1 slice soy-linseed toast topped with ¼ avo, 1 poached egg & 50g smoked salmon + 1 skim latte
 Leftover green bean & lentil salad with dried figs, feta & herbs, p132	Tuna & Vita-Weats 6 x Arnott's Vita-Weats, 1 x 95g can tuna (drained), 2 slices reduced-fat cheddar cheese & 1 sliced tomato	Tuna salad 1 x 95g can tuna (drained), 1 cup mixed leaves, ½ cup chickpeas, ½ cucumber, 10 cherry tomatoes & a drizzle of balsamic vinegar + 2 kiwifruit	Chicken wrap 1 wholemeal wrap filled with 100g skinkless barbecue chicken, 1 cup lettuce, ½ cup carrot, ½ cucumber & 1 slice cheddar cheese
Steak & vegies 100g beef eye fillet with ½ small roasted sweet potato cooked in 1 tsp olive oil & steamed broccolini	Vegetable frying pan pie, p127	Fish & fried rice 1 barramundi fillet with 1 cup cooked brown rice, ½ carrot & ½ cup broccoli cooked in 1 tsp sesame oil	Pork & vegies 100g pork fillet topped with 1 tsp mustard, baked with ½ cup pumpkin, ½ cup cauliflower & 1 small potato
- Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 cup frozen mixed berries 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 1 pear	1 cup carrot sticks & 1 tbs tzatziki - Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 cup frozen mixed berries	- Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 cup frozen mixed berries 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & ¼ cup natural muesli	- Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 cup frozen mixed berries 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 kiwifruit ►



“This meal plan – with busy people in mind – is full of fast, simple meals and snacks to keep you energised, while being light enough to help you lose weight.”

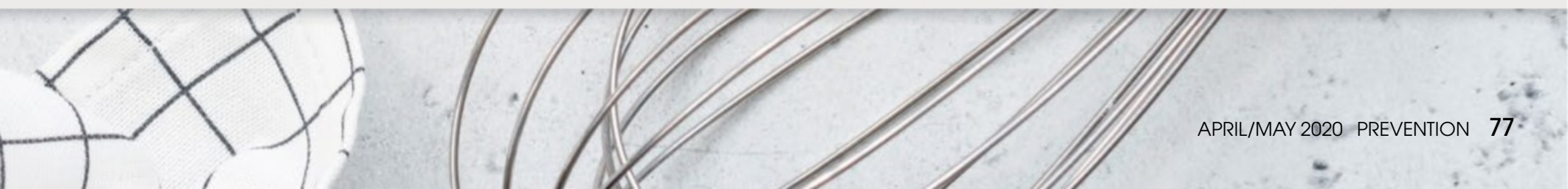
Melissa Meier, APD
Prevention dietitian

2
Week

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	
BREAKFAST	Brekkie smoothie 1 cup reduced-fat milk, 2 tbs yoghurt, ½ cup rolled oats & 1 banana	Ricotta & tomato toast 2 slices soy-linseed toast topped with ½ cup reduced-fat ricotta cheese, 1 sliced tomato & a drizzle of balsamic glaze + 1 skim latte	Cereal & fruit 2 x Sanitarium Weet-Bix with ½ cup reduced-fat milk & 1 sliced banana	
LUNCH	Tuna salad 1 x 95g can tuna (drained), 1 cup mixed leaves, ½ cucumber, 10 cherry tomatoes, ¼ avo & 20g fetta cheese + 2 cups plain, air-popped popcorn	Leftover Sweet & sour broccoli & cannellini bean salad , p129 + 1 cup grapes	Baked beans on toast 2 slices soy-linseed toast topped with 1 x 220g tin reduced-salt baked beans & 20g fetta cheese	
DINNER	½ x Sweet & sour broccoli & cannellini bean salad , p129 	Homemade haloumi & beef burger 1 beef patty, 1 slice of haloumi cheese, 1 tsp chilli jam, 2 tsp mayo & 1 handful rocket on 2 slices soy-linseed toast	½ x Rainbow salmon with ricotta , p125 (save leftovers for lunch tomorrow)	
SNACKS	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 1 pear • 1 cup carrot sticks & 1 tbs hummus • 1 slice soy-linseed toast topped with ¼ avo	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 kiwifruit • 1 cucumber & 1 tbs tzatziki	• Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk, 2 tbs plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 passionfruit • 30g almonds & 1 cup carrot sticks	PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCK



	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	Brekkie smoothie (see Monday)	Ricotta & tomato toast (see Tuesday) + 1 skim latte 	Cereal & fruit (see Wednesday)	Avo smash 1 slice soy-linseed toast topped with ¼ avo & 1 hard-boiled egg + 1 skim latte
	Leftover Rainbow salmon with ricotta , p125 	Leftover Chicken, veg & salad (see Thursday's dinner)	Tuna & Vita-Weats 6 x Arnott's Vita-Weats, 1 x 95g can tuna (drained), 2 slices cheddar cheese & 1 sliced tomato	Leftover Silverbeet with spiced chickpeas & almonds , p132
	½ x Chicken, veg & salad 2 grilled skinless chicken thighs, 2 corn cobs & 2 cups mixed leaves with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar (save leftovers for lunch tomorrow)	Salmon & vegies 1 salmon fillet grilled with lemon juice, ½ cup blanched peas & 1 cup roasted pumpkin	½ x Silverbeet with spiced chickpeas & almonds , p132 	 Antipasto chicken pasta , p124
	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt • 1 cup grapes • 2 cups plain, air-popped popcorn	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt & 2 passionfruit • Homemade smoothie made of 1 cup reduced-fat milk & 1 cup frozen mixed berries • 1 cucumber & 1 tbs tzatziki	• 1 x 170g tub plain reduced-fat yoghurt • 2 kiwifruit 	• 1 apple • 2 kiwifruit 



TONE & TORCH FAT *faster*

In addition to your new healthy menu, this workout plan, created by fitness expert Chris Freytag, uses ‘eccentric training’ (emphasising the lowering portion of a rep) to help you get fit quickly. The technique increases the time your muscles are under tension, which helps boost muscle fibre activation.

For this routine, instead of lifting and lowering for two counts each, you’ll double the ‘eccentric’ phase of an exercise (straightening your arm during a bicep curl) to four counts.

“Each muscle fibre works harder, so you get firmer faster,” Chris Freytag explains. A US study found that, after just one week, women who did ‘eccentric training’ increased their strength nearly twice as much as those who lifted weights at a normal pace. You’ll also build more muscle and rev up your metabolism to burn fat faster.

What you’ll need

Two sets of dumbbells (1-2kg and 4-5kg); a chair.

WHAT TO DO

Week 1 Do the strength routine each day, alternating between Workout A (for your chest, back and abs) and Workout B (for your arms, legs and butt).

Week 2 Follow the same schedule but challenge yourself during the strength routine by trying the Make It Harder options for each exercise.

THE **STRENGTH** ROUTINE

A

HIP DROP

Lie facedown, balancing on your elbows, forearms and toes; abs tight.

Slow IT DOWN Twist to right and lower right hip to floor in 4 counts. (Keep back straight.) Raise to start position in 2 counts. Repeat to left. Do 8 to 10 times each side.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Do 12 to 15 times each side.



BEACH BALL HUG

Lie face up, dumbbells above chest, elbows slightly bent, palms in. Raise left leg so shin is parallel to floor.

Slow IT DOWN Lower arms out to sides in 4 counts as you straighten left leg, keeping foot off floor. In 2 counts, pull knee back in and raise arms, squeezing chest muscles as if you’re hugging a beach ball. Do 6 times; repeat with right leg.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Raise both feet off the floor.





FULL BODY ROLL-UP

Lie face up, legs extended, arms overhead, palms facing each other. Raise arms toward feet; pull abs in; roll head, shoulders and back off the floor; and reach toward toes in 4 counts.

Slow IT DOWN Roll back down to floor one vertebra at a time, taking about 6 to 8 counts to lower.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Hold a light weight (1-2kg) in both hands.



BREASTSTROKE

Lie facedown, arms extended overhead, palms facing in. Lift head and arms off floor and hold for 2 counts. Lift chest a few centimetres off floor and swim arms out to sides and down toward legs (thumbs toward floor) in 2 counts. (Keep abs tight, toes on the floor.)

Slow IT DOWN Lower chest and bend arms, bringing them along body back to start position in 4 counts. Do 8 to 10 times.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): As you lift chest and swim arms, raise both feet off the floor, then lower.



READ THE PAPER

Sit with knees bent, heels on floor, arms in front of body, as if holding a closed newspaper.

Slow IT DOWN Roll back halfway down to floor and twist to left in 4 counts, as if opening the paper on left side. Pull yourself up to start position in 2 counts. Repeat on right side. Do 8 to 12 times on each side.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Hold a light weight (1-2kg) in each hand. ►

THE STRENGTH ROUTINE

B

PLIÉ WITH BICEPS CURL

Stand with feet wide, toes out, dumbbells by thighs, palms forward. Bend knees and lower for 2 counts, as you curl weights toward shoulders.

Slow IT DOWN Squeeze glutes and inner thighs as you stand up and straighten arms in 4 counts. Do 8 to 12 times.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Use heavier weights.



FORWARD LUNGE & RAISE THE ROOF

Stand with feet together, dumbbells overhead, palms forward.

Slow IT DOWN Step right foot forward and bend both knees as you lower weights toward shoulders in 4 counts. Stand up to start position, pressing weights overhead in 2 counts.

Do 8 to 12 times; switch legs.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Swing left knee forward to hip height as you stand up.



Pick a HAND WEIGHT

Feeling inspired to start working out at home and try the routines here? We've found some funky, fun weights that you can happily park in the corner of your living room between workout sessions.

BALA BANGLES

If you don't love the idea of having to hold onto a weight for your whole routine, try wrist weights like Bala Bangles. They don't limit your range of motion – plus they're stylish and comfortable to wear.

\$79.80, [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au)



PILATES & TONING DUMBBELLS TWIN-PACK

Start off light and easy with these 0.5kg weights from Decathlon. These colourful dumbbells won't roll away when you put them down and they're simple to clean.

\$6, [decathlon.com.au](https://www.decathlon.com.au)





SQUAT WITH STRAIGHT ARM PRESSBACK

Stand with feet about 10cm apart, dumbbells at sides, palms facing behind you.

Slow IT DOWN Sit back, keeping weight over heels, as arms swing forward toward knees for 4 counts. Stand up in 2 counts while pressing weights behind you. Do 8 to 12 times.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Lift left leg back and squeeze glutes as you stand; switch legs halfway through set. ►

*Try
this*

Slow down your weights routine and you'll build more muscle and get stronger. You'll also burn fat faster.



CELCIUS YBELL

The 4-in-1 hybrid YBell will not only be useful for these dumbbell exercises, but it doubles as a kettlebell or medicine ball. Rust-resistant and non-slip, it comes in different sizes and works both indoors and out. **From \$49.99, rebelsport.com.au**



MB ACTIVE BY MICHELLE BRIDGES

12KG DUMBBELL WEIGHTS SET

Give yourself a little variety with this weights set from Michelle Bridges' Big W range. Colour-coded by weight, this set allows you to work your way up to new levels as you get stronger without having to buy more equipment. **\$49, bigw.com.au**



HART JOGGING AEROBIC WEIGHT 2KG

With a contoured handle for extra grip, these weights will work for your strength training routine or to add some extra oomph to your next walk. **\$9, hartsport.com.au**

THE **STRENGTH** ROUTINE*Pump it up!*

Music can help you exercise harder, better, faster, stronger. We asked leading Aussie fitness gurus to share what's on their workout playlists.

Elsa Pataky

co-creator of fitness app Centr with husband Chris Hemsworth

- *Stronger* – Kanye West
- *Can't Hold Us* – Macklemore & Ryan Lewis (featured artist Ray Dalton)
- *Bad Blood* – Taylor Swift (featured artist Kendrick Lamar)
- *Run the World (Girls)* – Beyoncé
- *Roar* – Katy Perry

Michelle Bridges

creator of 12-week health program 12WBT

- *Blinding Lights* – The Weekend
- *Rhythm of the Night* – Sean Finn & Corona
- *Free Your Body* – Chris Lake & Solardo
- *Break the Rules* – Charli XCX (Tiesto remix)
- *Shut Up and Dance* – Walk The Moon

Sam Wood

founder of 28 by Sam Wood

- *Kickstart my Heart* – Mötley Crüe
- *Robot Rock* – Daft Punk
- *Hells Bells* – AC/DC
- *Starboy* – The Weekend
- *Power* – Kanye West

Lauren Hannaford

presenter of FHIT by Lauren Hannaford

- *Nothing Like This* – Blonde & Craig David (Chris Lake remix)
- *On Bended Knee* – Boyz II Men (RobbieG remix)
- *The Girl is Mine* – 99 Souls (featured artists Destiny's Child & Brandy)
- *Giant* – Calvin Harris & Rag'n'Bone

Tiffany Hall

founder of TIFFXO.com

- *XO* – Beyoncé
- *Uptown Funk* – Mark Ronson (featured artist Bruno Mars)
- *Kiss My Fat Ass* – Sheppard
- *Best Life* – Koyotie
- *Jackie Chan* – Tiësto & Dzeko

B**TIP IT OVER**

Stand with dumbbell in left hand at side, right hand on chair for balance.

Slow-IT DOWN Keeping spine straight and abs tight, lean forward in 4 counts, and lower left arm while lifting left leg. Stand up in 2 counts, while doing a biceps curl and raising left knee in front. Do 8 times; switch sides.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): Use a heavier weight and skip the chair.

**CURTSY LAT RAISE**

Stand with feet together, dumbbells at sides, palms in.

Slow-IT DOWN Cross right leg behind left, bend knees, and lower as you raise right arm out to side in 4 counts. (Keep left knee over ankle and facing forward.) Stand up to start position and lower arm in 2 counts. Do 8 to 12 times; switch sides.

Make it HARDER (Week 2): As you stand up, lift right leg out to side. Skip the chair. **P**



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and online at www.freshwaterfarm.com.au





Fast fact

Australians
check their phones
85 to 130 times
every day.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY
OF SYDNEY

Shopping, social media, wine o'clock ADDICTION... OR JUST A HABIT?

We can get hooked on loads of things, from substances to the rush from behaviours like shopping and online gaming – even things that start off healthy, like exercise. Here, we comb through what happens in our bodies to reel us in and what it takes to break free.

By MARISA COHEN

So what *is* addiction, anyway? We've all said it: "I'm so addicted to salted caramel/*Game of Thrones*/my new dry shampoo." Yeah, no. While you may love and even overdo things like that, it's when you become so preoccupied with a substance or behaviour that you've lost control over it – and you keep pursuing it despite negative consequences to your health, relationships and finances – that you've crossed over into the addiction zone.

This happens due to the brain's plasticity. Repeated exposure to environments and behaviours change the way the neurons talk to each other, locking in certain reactions and routines. Here's how: The first time you try a shot of vodka or pop a pill, a rush of the neurotransmitter dopamine floods the pleasure centre of your brain, making you feel more confident, more aroused, less anxious. "But addictive substances hijack the system by spiking dopamine levels even higher than

natural rewards do," explains psychiatrist Kelly Dunn, PhD. She says that, over time, the brain is rewired so you need more of the drug, drink or behaviour to get a buzz, and the stuff that used to make you happy starts to feel comparatively dull and joyless.

The worst part is, as those neurons get rewired, you start needing more and more not just to get high, but to keep from dropping into the physical and emotional abyss of withdrawal, so you may become physically as well as psychologically dependent. Eventually, a person who is hooked on a substance uses it merely to keep from feeling bad, and intense cravings are triggered by the anticipation of taking it – the smell of the liquor, the sight of white powder. This makes quitting incredibly hard.

Keep reading to find out what's going on in the brain of an addicted person, why some of us are more likely to succumb, and how to tell if you or someone you know needs help. ►

This is your brain on **DRUGS OR COCKTAILS OR SHOPPING...**

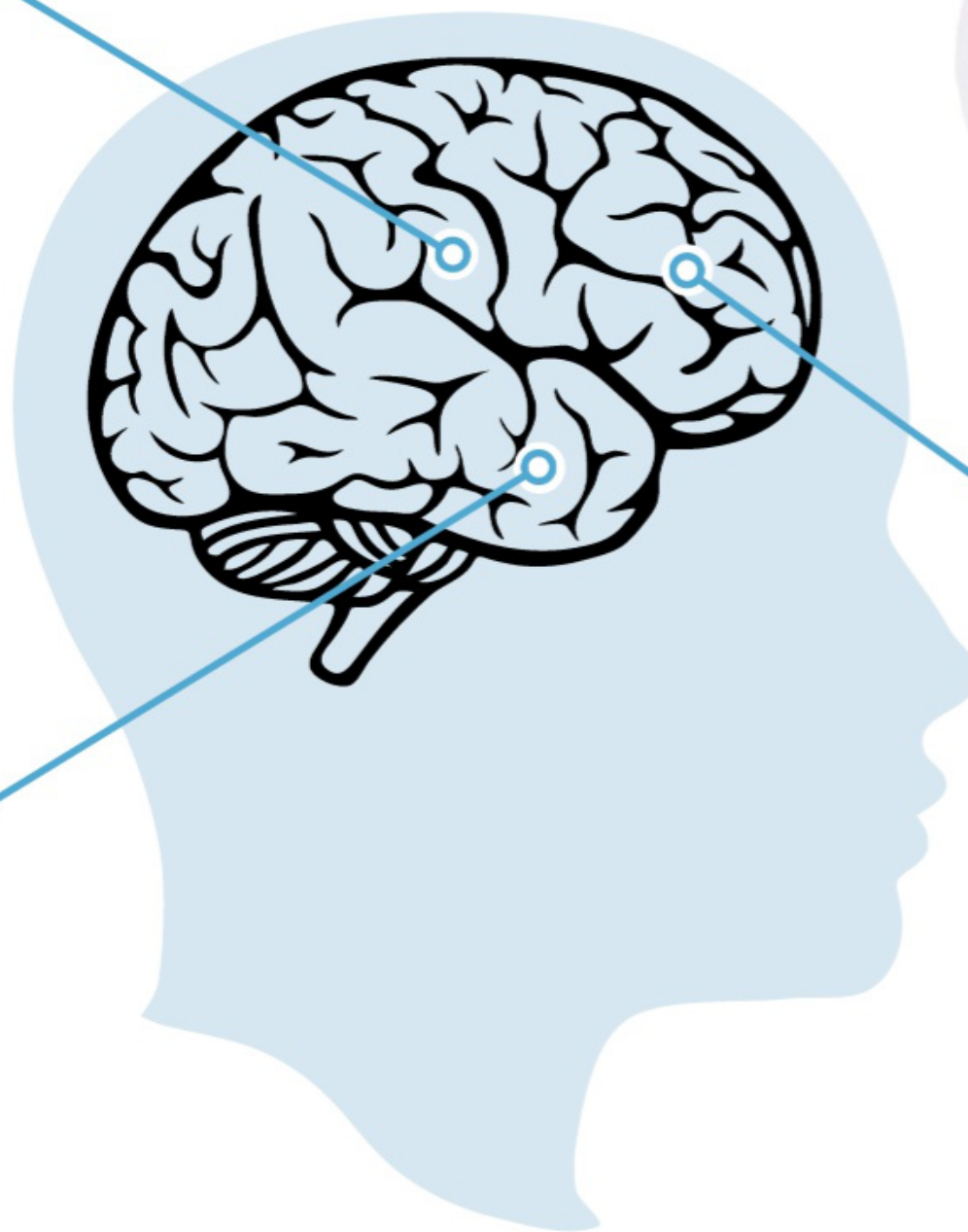
PLEASURE PALACE

HABITS HARDEN HERE

The **basal ganglia** are the reward circuit in your brain, the area where you experience pleasure. The addictive substance (associated sights, smells or sounds) signals neurons to release neurotransmitters, including dopamine, which flood the subregion of the basal ganglia called the nucleus accumbens. Dopamine also stimulates another subregion, the dorsal striatum – that's where the habits are learned and solidified.

STRESS ZONE WIRED FOR WITHDRAWAL

The **extended amygdala** is the brain's centre for stress, anxiety and irritability. When someone tries to stop using, neurotransmitters including corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF), norepinephrine and dynorphin are released into this region, making her feel terrible when she can't get a fix.



13%

of Australians
aged 50 to 64
drink 15 or more
standard drinks
a week.

SOURCE: THE ABC'S AUSTRALIA
TALKS NATIONAL SURVEY

DECISION CENTRAL OUT-OF- CONTROL IMPULSES

The **prefrontal cortex** is responsible for making decisions, organising thoughts and controlling impulses and emotions (it is notoriously underdeveloped in adolescents). In someone who is addicted, activity of the neurotransmitter glutamate is increased, disrupting how dopamine affects this region. This turns down the system that says, "Stop! Don't do it!" while turning up the system that learns how best to find and use the substance.

HOW DO YOU GET HOOKED ON AN ACTIVITY?

In the same way as with a substance: Someone with alcohol use disorder may get a rush from the clink of ice in a glass, and a person who can't stop shopping may feel one from the scent of her favourite department store.

"When we take a picture of the brain of someone with a gambling problem, for instance, we see similarities to drug and alcohol problems," says psychiatrist and neuroscientist Dr Jon Grant. Similar regional brain activation occurs in people addicted to food, exercise, even tanning – and the World Health Organization has now recognised 'gaming disorder' as a diagnosable problem. It refers to people who "have trouble controlling the amount of time they spend playing digital or video games."



WHO IS LIKELY TO BECOME ADDICTED – *and who isn't?*

GENETICS

Alcoholism runs in families, and so does drug use – in fact, experts estimate that your genes account for about half of your risk for addiction. In the case of drugs, this may be related to the way the body metabolises them. Some studies have even found that a genetic quirk in which the brain has less of a certain dopamine receptor is related to a higher risk of addiction, psychiatrist Dr Kelly Dunn explains. But environment and other factors also come into play, so the fact that your mum or dad was addicted doesn't mean it's your destiny as well.

TOLERANCE FOR TAKING RISKS

There are certain personality traits – such as being impulsive and risk-taking – that make you more likely to try alcohol or drugs for the first time, and the more often you try them, the more likely you are to become addicted, Dr Dunn says. While taking chances has long been associated with substance abuse, a recent German study found that it is also linked to a higher rate of gaming disorder in otherwise healthy males.

While no-one can say with certainty who will walk away from an addictive substance or behaviour after trying it and who will fall down the rabbit hole, there are clear risk factors:

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Emotional and physical stress may have long-lasting effects on the brain, especially in its early stages of development. That's why kids who suffer trauma or grow up in stressful environments, like extreme poverty, may be more vulnerable to addiction as they get older. A 2016 study at the University of Texas found that adverse childhood experiences, including physical and sexual abuse and living with an addicted parent, correlated with a high risk of substance abuse even in adults aged 50 and over.

HOW OLD YOU ARE WHEN YOU FIRST TRY IT

The earlier you start experimenting with a substance or behaviour, the more likely you are to get hooked, since the prefrontal cortex – the rational part of the brain that overrides the “Ooh, cool, let's try it!” risk-taking section – is not fully developed until the mid-20s.

WHERE YOU LIVE AND HANG OUT

If you're around a lot of drugs and alcohol, you're more likely to try them. The family and neighbourhood you grow up in, your peers and the legality and availability of different addictive substances all come into play. ►



YOU'RE NOT ADDICTED, *but...*

A bad habit may not totally trash your life, but it can still cause you problems. Here's what may really be going on – and what to do.

INTENSE CRAVINGS

People do become addicted to food, meaning they cannot stop overeating despite dire consequences. If you can't stop noshing on something when it's in front of you, but it hasn't taken over your life, those are cravings, which are only one symptom of food addiction. "Research has shown that the specific combination of fat and refined carbs found only in junk foods like pizza and brownies is more associated with symptoms of food addiction as compared with foods that are naturally high in fat (eg, meat) or carbohydrates (eg, fruit or whole grains)," says Erica Schulte, a researcher into food addiction. If you fear that your craving for certain foods is tipping towards addiction, then going cold turkey, while most difficult in the first three to five days, may help that craving wane, she says.

MISUSE

If your compulsion to scroll through Instagram or check texts is getting in the way of meaningful conversations or making you fall behind at work, you could have a misuse issue. "Misuse means the behaviour causes problems, but it's still controllable – whereas addiction is a compulsion that is no longer easily controlled," Dr Dunn says. Use tech tools to fight back: Changing the display to grayscale from colour may make the screen less alluring, says clinical psychologist Dr Andrea Bonior. Tools on your devices (Screen Time on Apple products; Google's Digital Wellbeing on Android) set time limits on apps and let you know when you've hit your cap.

INERTIA

You cue up Netflix to watch one episode of *The Crown*, and the next thing you know, it's 4am and you've powered through the entire season. This is a case of inertia, Dr Bonior says. "The technology is set up to suck you in – they give you a dramatic sneak peek, or it automatically starts to play the next episode." To interrupt the momentum, "give yourself a limit of two or three episodes, and then have a phone call, a bath or another treat planned for the moment that last episode is over," she suggests.

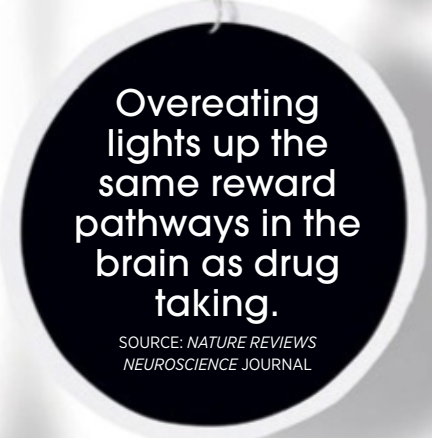
Myth buster

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN 'ADDICTIVE PERSONALITY'?

If you're, say, a recovering alcoholic, does that mean you're liable to become hooked on something else, whether it's shopping or doughnuts?

Not quite. While the term 'addictive personality' gets thrown around a lot, experts point out that it's not a clinical diagnosis. It's true that the same risk factors that make you susceptible to one addiction can make you more likely to become addicted to something else, and some people get hooked on more than one thing (a study in the journal *Evaluation & the Health Professions* found that around 23 per cent of addicts have multiple addictions).

But much of that may just be because of proximity, says psychiatrist Dr Michael Weaver. "These things cluster together. If you spend a lot of time in a casino, where there's alcohol around, there are probably a lot of cigarettes, too." So there is every reason to believe that those who are able to kick one habit can steer clear of others, as long as they stay away from the places and people who trigger them.



Overeating lights up the same reward pathways in the brain as drug taking.

SOURCE: NATURE REVIEWS
NEUROSCIENCE JOURNAL

RECOVERING FROM AN ADDICTION

There are well-known ways to get help – therapy, medications, support groups and more – and going it alone is not recommended. These at-home tactics may smooth a bumpy recovery.

Exercise Heading out for a run or taking a dance class can create a natural high, reduce the effects of stress and even ease an addict through withdrawal. Exercise may also stimulate reward centres in the brain, helping ease cravings.

Mindfulness A study in US medical journal *JAMA Psychiatry* found that people in treatment for alcohol or drug addiction who participated in an eight-week mindfulness course had significantly lower relapse rates a year later than those who had only traditional therapy and support.

Online support A variety of apps are available to help people manage their recovery and get 24/7 support from both peers and counsellors, including *I Am Sober* from ReachOut Australia, "an addiction buddy useful for quitting any activity or substance". **P**

“My
5,000km voyage
made me realise
that when you follow
your heart, all kinds
of doors can
open.”



The challenge *of a* LIFETIME

Michelle Lee spent 68 days alone bravely rowing across the Atlantic Ocean with no land in sight. What inspired this massage therapist to take up rowing in her 40s – and then break an Australian record despite a heartbreaking personal tragedy the day she set sail?

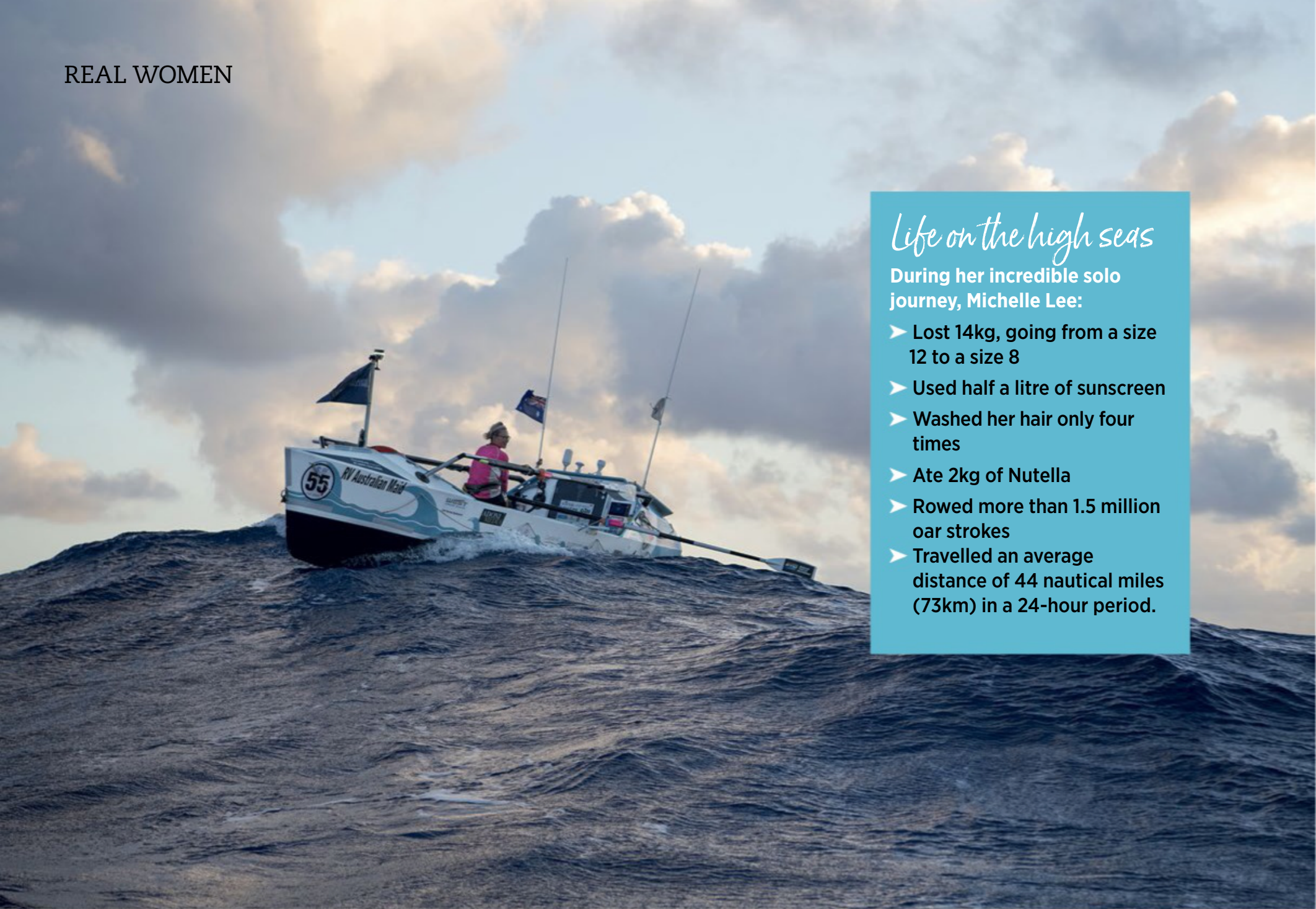
BY STEPHANIE OSFIELD

Michelle Lee, 47, knows what it's like to test her limits. Last year, the Sydney massage therapist completed 68 days rowing 5,000km across the Atlantic Ocean, all alone and with no land in sight. Having previously completed some triathlons and walked Papua New Guinea's Kokoda Trail, Michelle was used to setting challenges, but she was not an elite athlete. Before her voyage, she was not even a rower – but she was a woman with a mission.

“Looking back, I can see I was wanting to do something to give my life more meaning,” Michelle says. “My voyage certainly delivered – and also made me feel very alive.”

The inspiration for her adventure came from reading the book *Rowing the Atlantic*, about English businesswoman Roz Savage, who completed a challenging solo rowing race even though almost all her equipment broke – including her oars! “When I finished her book, I was so in awe of her that I thought about it obsessively for the next two years,” Michelle says. “I thought, ‘I want to make a voyage like that because it seems like an incredibly rich experience.’”

During this time, Michelle hatched a plan – to enter the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, one of the toughest, most physically challenging nautical races in the world. To get her body ‘sea-worthy’, she started doing 13 weekly ►



Life on the high seas

During her incredible solo journey, Michelle Lee:

- Lost 14kg, going from a size 12 to a size 8
- Used half a litre of sunscreen
- Washed her hair only four times
- Ate 2kg of Nutella
- Rowed more than 1.5 million oar strokes
- Travelled an average distance of 44 nautical miles (73km) in a 24-hour period.

ABOVE: Michelle Lee on day 34 in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in her boat, *RV Australian Maid* (photo was taken onboard the official support yacht).

sessions of rowing – sometimes in Sydney Harbour but mostly on a rowing machine. Her training included morning and evening sessions scheduled around work, with an eight-hour rowing session at the gym every Sunday.

“Though I always kept fit, this exercise was at a whole new level, so at first every part of my body burned with pain. But slowly my endurance and muscle strength increased,” Michelle says. Her training also included a daily hour-long intensive stretching and strengthening exercise program to boost mobility for the trip. “When I told people what I was doing, my siblings were worried, some friends thought I was mad and some friends came and sat with me to chat and spur me on during my eight-hour sessions,” she recalls.

Michelle started a GoFundMe campaign for her voyage and found a coach and mentor to guide her training. Within six months, she set a new world record on a rowing machine, shaving 11 hours off the old record for rowing one million metres in one go. But her specially made boat was still being finished and equipped, so by the time everything was ready, the preparation had taken two years.

In the months leading up to the race, she faced unexpected hardships. Her coach, who had also become her romantic partner, ended their relationship just weeks before the voyage. Then

on the morning of her departure, her father died suddenly. “Those events were quite devastating and for a moment I thought I couldn’t do the race,” she says. “But I wanted to honour all the people who’d helped to get me there, so I decided to make my trip about them. I was also raising money for The Sanctuary, a Sydney crisis centre for women and children affected by domestic violence, and I didn’t want to let them down.”

At the mercy of nature

Michelle set off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands on December 12, 2018, en route to Antigua in the Caribbean in her boat, *RV Australian Maid* (RV stands for rowing vessel). The boat was seven metres long, two metres wide and weighed almost a tonne when fully loaded with equipment, such as her 8kg satellite navigation system. This was solar-powered and had a GPS system and electronic chart plotter she constantly consulted to help keep her on the right course. In the stern, as well as other supplies, she stashed 120kg of tinned food to use as emergency rations if she broke down and 150 litres of water in 300 bottles in case her desalination machine stopped working.

“As the race began, I felt exhilarated and couldn’t believe I was really there,” she recalls. “I felt relief that I had finally made it to the start line. And I

During Michelle's historic 68-day journey, she crossed four time zones. She faced daily rain squalls and swells, and large waves, all with no land in sight. "By the 11th hour of the competition, I couldn't see any of the other competitors, so it really felt like I was out there all alone. If I got into difficulty, I would have to do a Mayday call via satellite phone. I also had an emergency beacon and four different-coloured types of flares – one for collision, mayday, rescue and one with more smoke to help indicate my location. If I had an emergency, there might be a yacht nearby, but the nearest vessel might also be four or five days away. So I felt vulnerable and at the mercy of nature, but I also felt I was in an aquatic paradise. Every day I saw amazing sea life, including dolphins, whales, fish and birds. There were so many picture-postcard moments like seeing the beauty of a rainbow uninterrupted by land and the incredible brightness of the stars and phosphorescence of the moon in the middle of the ocean with no light spill from houses or streets."

The simplicity of life at sea was appealing at first. “You get back to basics, which can be kind of beautiful. I had none of the usual distractions, such as email, social media, radio or TV. But I did have my iPod loaded with music and I recharged it every day with a solar charging port so that I could start each morning listening to Queen or Elton John – music which uplifted and motivated me.” Eating was mostly a bland affair. Michelle’s four daily meals totalled around 29,000kJ (7,000 calories) and consisted of dehydrated foods mixed with water and around 12,500kJ (3,000 calories) of snacks of sweet foods like custard, TimTams or fruitcake to keep her powering on. But she still shed a whopping 14kg due to the energy burned through rowing. “For the first two-and-a-half weeks I rowed around 10 hours a day but by week three, I was rowing 14 hours a day. Sometimes the aches and pains were so bad it felt like my body was screaming out in pain. I developed sores on my bottom, small holes in my fingers and huge callouses on my hands, which split open. ►

BELOW RIGHT: It's a thumbs-up from Michelle as this photo is snapped from a passing yacht.

As the race began, I felt exhilarated,
and thought, 'I can't wait to see
exactly what I'm made of.'



I felt so good that I had showed that age is just a number and it doesn't mean that you have to slow down.

"I developed earache and toothache, which I took antibiotics to treat. My tendons, hamstrings and toes felt constantly sore and strained to breaking point. That's when I realised how much the mind rules the body. When I felt I couldn't go on, I distracted myself with music or audiobooks like *The Thorn Birds*, *The Power of One* and *Endurance*, about the explorer Shackleton in the Antarctic. I was also grieving for my dad, so I spent a lot of time just thinking about my childhood and many memories of being with my family and friends. Pushing through those low points gave me the biggest sense of triumph, so I wouldn't change any of them. I made a rule that no matter how broken my body felt, I had to get on that rowing seat every day."

Many of those days were a scorching 28 or 30 degrees, with sun reflecting off the water and no shelter on deck. "But I'm proud to say I never

got sunburned on the trip because I covered myself with sunscreen and rashies. What I wasn't prepared for was windburn so bad on my lips that the pain felt almost unbearable and I had to make a big Bandaid of gauze and gaffer to protect them!"

Crying with loneliness

Despite all the physical difficulties, it was the social isolation that proved Michelle's biggest challenge. "At home, I'm fine with my own company but out on the ocean alone without talk and touch, I was craving human kindness and contact so much that it almost felt like I was withdrawing from a drug I desperately needed. By day 23, I started crying, mostly because of loneliness and then I cried every day until the end of the race.

"Luckily via the satellite phone, I was able to talk to my designated person on land – my friend Tony Roberts, who is an experienced sailor. On days when I was a sobbing mess, he knew when to say comforting words and when to do some tough love and tell me to pull myself together. He also gave great advice to help fix constant equipment issues. My autopilot played up, which I needed to track my course, and my steering foot pedal broke and I had to glue it back together, and my water desalination machine started sucking air too, which could have been a serious issue if he hadn't helped me sort it out. In the end, my favourite piece of equipment was what I called my 'bucket then chuck it' toilet – because I could trust that it would never break down!"

Sleep became a daily challenge. "I slept in a hatch at the back of the boat that was about 183cm [around 6 feet] long so luckily I could fully stretch out my 167cm body. My mattress was five pieces of foam cut to fit the small space. I would lie down from 10.30 each night to 5.00 the next morning, but I had to set an alarm to get up every hour to check I was still on course and check my surroundings for safety. Then around day 44, my rudder came loose and the constant banging noise was unbearable at night. So I used guided meditations and techniques like tapping points on my face and body to calm and distract myself."

Against the wind

As she was racing other boats, Michelle was constantly checking her course trying to cover plenty of distance at high speed. "On a good day, I would travel eight or nine knots and around 27km over 24 hours. On my best day, I managed just





over 98km in a day. Sometimes the wind pushed me around so I had to throw out 70 metres of line to create drag to keep me at the best angle and on the right course. Then conditions would change and I would suddenly have to pull it all back in, which was exhausting. An infestation of hundreds of pippies on the bottom of my boat could have slowed me down by days so I had to dive under and clean them off the hull. It was super dark under there so at times that felt really scary.”

And the winner is...

When she finally saw land again and crossed the finish line in Antigua in the Caribbean on February 19 last year – after rowing for 19 hours straight – Michelle was exhausted but elated that she won the race. “I felt emotional and teary, but also sheer relief that I would soon be safe again.”

In winning the race, she became the first Australian woman to row solo across any ocean and only the 16th woman to ever row solo on the ocean. “I was so incredibly happy that I’d made the distance and felt both emotional and invincible,” she says. “I had a huge hug with my girlfriend who had travelled there to meet me. Then I celebrated with a burger, fries and coleslaw, along with a rum punch – it all tasted amazing. The best thing about being back on dry land was having a hot shower and sleeping in a real bed! The trickiest thing was feeling wobbly for five days as I got my land legs back on dry ground.”

Months later, when Michelle was named *Australian Geographic* Adventurer of the Year, it was the icing on the cake. “I felt so good that I had modelled the power and endurance of women and showed that age is just a number and it doesn’t mean you need to slow down,” she says. “My time



out on the ocean alone definitely made me more resilient and self-reliant but, at the same time, it reminded me how much I need people and that every moment is precious. So since I’ve come back home, I’ve become closer in all my relationships – I never waste time on small talk. Though I’m back doing massage therapy full-time, I still row twice weekly on a rowing machine for an hour, and I don’t have a car, so I walk and cycle everywhere. But I have been restless since my return, so I might soon start training for another solo rowing challenge. Though it was hard and sometimes gruelling, my rowing voyage made me realise that, when you follow your heart and true values, all kinds of doors to new experiences can open.” **P**

FAR LEFT: Michelle at La Gomera, in the Canary Islands, before the race started; TOP: In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean she had only fish and birds for company; ABOVE: Draped in the Australian flag after crossing the finishing line in Antigua, in the Caribbean, after 68 days at sea.

Are you LOSING HEIGHT?

Ward off shrinkage by adopting these bone-friendly habits that will help you walk tall at every age.

BY STEPHANIE OSFIELD

Have you done something to boost your bone health today? If not, you could be selling your bones short. Literally. Most women naturally lose about a centimetre in height every decade after their 40s. But if you don't give your bones enough TLC, by your 'midult' years, your bones may not be going strong.

Women who lose height have a higher risk of a hip fracture down the track. "Height loss can indicate osteoporosis, which often shows no signs until it's quite advanced and a fracture occurs," says Dr Greg Lyubomirsky, CEO of Osteoporosis Australia. "If loss of height measures 3cm or more,

it should be quickly investigated with an X-ray to check for small fractures of the spine, which a woman might not even realise she has."

At this point, medication and lifestyle changes are used to try to prevent further problems. But prevention is better than cure. So act now to protect your bones. All over your body, from your spine and wrists, to your legs and ankles, your bones are in a continuous state of 'remodelling', where old bone is replaced by new bone. This means that, at every age, your habits could be making or potentially breaking your bones. To shore up your strength and stop shrinkage, adopt these bone-friendly habits: ►







L JUMP TO IT

Like muscles, bones need to be challenged to get stronger or stay strong. "Bone cells grow in response to the 'loading' of impact exercise, such as skipping and hopping, which involves jumping and landing," says Professor Belinda Beck, an expert in bones and exercise at Queensland's Griffith University and The Bone Clinic. "Resistance training, such as lifting weights, also benefits bone strength and balance."

Just like muscle strength, 'use it or lose it' also applies to your bones. "To keep bones strong and healthy, you need to keep exercising throughout life," Prof Beck says. If you've been a couch potato for quite some time, it can take around six months of regular exercise before the positive bone benefits occur. Pushed for time this week? Then do some star jumps or run on the spot for two minutes.

Did you know?

Too much salt can leach calcium from your bones. Use herbs and spices to flavour food instead.

2 FEED YOUR BONES

Bones are not like concrete: they don't set for life.

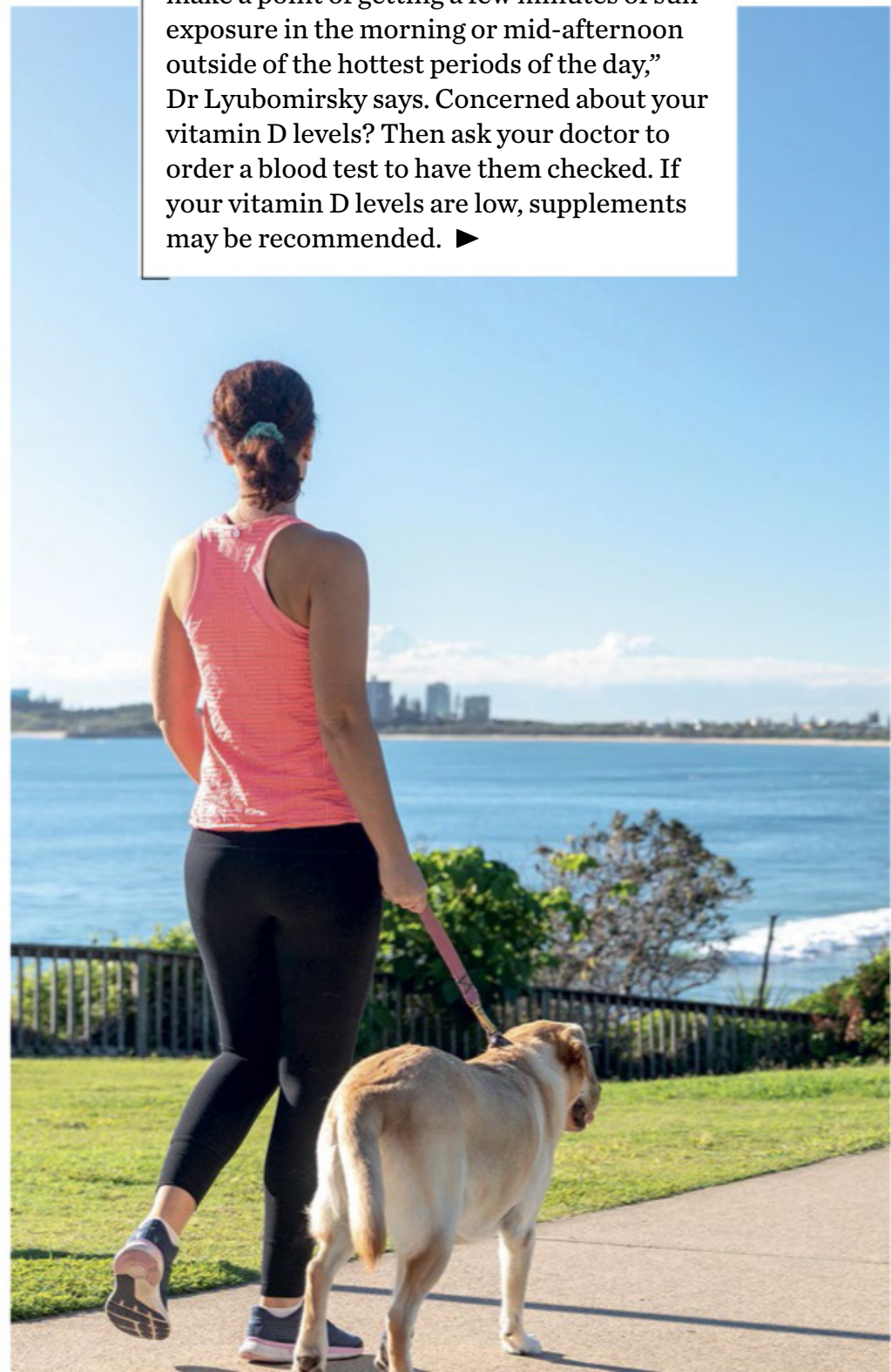
If your calcium levels drop too low, your body withdraws as much as it needs to keep up important functions like blood clotting and muscle contraction. Your bones may then become thinner and less dense, bumping up your risk of developing osteoporosis, which affects one in four women over 75. The best protection? You know the drill: a little calcium a day keeps bone problems at bay. To give your bones a strong hold, your calcium intake per day should be two-and-a-half serves of dairy (1000mg) from ages 19-50 and four-plus serves (1300mg) for women aged 51 and over. "One serve is either one glass of milk, 40g of cheddar cheese, or a 200g tub of yoghurt," says dietitian Melissa Meier. "Other good sources of calcium include canned fish (with edible bones) and calcium-fortified rice milk and soy milk."

3 SEEK A LITTLE SUN

Some 90 per cent of our supply of vitamin D is made from sunlight exposure directly onto the skin (not through glass).

This happens when the sun's UV rays are absorbed and make a compound called 7-dehydrocholesterol, a 'cousin' of healthy cholesterol, which then helps your skin produce vitamin D. As well as entering your bloodstream, vitamin D also taxis to your gut, where it helps absorb the bone-building minerals calcium and phosphate.

According to the Cancer Council, most of us get enough sun exposure just through incidental activities like hanging out the washing or walking the dog. "But if you tend to spend most of your day indoors, make a point of getting a few minutes of sun exposure in the morning or mid-afternoon outside of the hottest periods of the day," Dr Lyubomirsky says. Concerned about your vitamin D levels? Then ask your doctor to order a blood test to have them checked. If your vitamin D levels are low, supplements may be recommended. ►





Fast fact

On the inside, your bones look a little like honeycomb.

DO YOU NEED A BONE DENSITY TEST?

A bone density test is a quick, painless scan that measures the strength of your bones, usually at the hip and spine. Your GP may recommend you have one if you:

- Have a family history or osteoporosis.
- Take corticosteroids for a health condition like arthritis or asthma.
- Have gone through menopause and are not taking HRT.
- Are very thin or underweight.
- Suffer a health condition like rheumatoid arthritis, coeliac disease or thyroid issues.
- Have experienced a fracture after only a mild trauma.

4 BE SAVVY ABOUT WHAT YOU SIP

The drinks you choose every day can boost or blitz your bone health. So smarten up about your choice of beverage:

Cola: Women who drink cola (even decaffeinated) have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis. A US study found that women who drink three or more cola drinks a day had almost four per cent lower bone mineral density at the hip. The problem is not the caffeine – it appears to be due to the phosphoric acid in cola, which leaches calcium from bones.

Smoking and Alcohol: Smoking in any amount has a detrimental effect on bone density, while excessive alcohol intake has been shown to increase bone loss. Aim for no more than two alcoholic drinks per day and have one to two alcohol-free days every week. **Tea:** Enjoy your cuppa. Research has shown that women who drink tea have higher bone density – possibly due to the high antioxidant content of tea. Just make sure that you don't take calcium supplements within an hour of your English breakfast or orange pekoe as the tannin in the tea can bind with the calcium, making it less available to strengthen bones in your body.

5 STRESS LESS

Stress can increase your levels of cortisol, which can impact on the osteoblasts that help build bones. So chill out. Enjoy more activities that make you feel great, such as catching up with girlfriends or spending some time in nature – especially doing a spot of gardening. US research has found regular gardening can be as good for strong bones as pumping iron in the gym. Good reason to stop and smell the roses. **P**

A bouquet of flowers, including white roses, orange ranunculus, and a large pink peony, is arranged in a clear glass jar. The jar is placed on a stack of several books. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*Find
out*

ARE YOU AT RISK OF BRITTLE BONES?

For a quick self-assessment, take the Garvan Institute's Know Your Bones online quiz: knowyourbones.org.au



*Live by the
new rules*

The ability to build new neural connections and rewire existing ones is known as neuroplasticity. The old thinking? You can accomplish this only when you're young (we're talking teen years, people). The reality: It's possible at any stage and age, if you know what to do.



Brain fog?

Regain your sharp mind

Your mind is built for speed, productivity, flexibility and resourcefulness. If yours sometimes feels sluggish, here's how you can make your brain work stronger, faster and smarter.

BY MEGHAN RABBITT

For years, neuroscientists thought the brain just declined over time. But the latest, most exciting science reveals the brain is malleable, like a muscle, and able to continuously grow cells and make brand-new connections throughout our lives.

"We now know that you can continuously get sharper, speedier and just plain better at everything you do," says neuroscientist Michael Merzenich, PhD, founder of the Brain Plasticity Institute. So take a few seconds and think about yours right now: Does it feel like a Formula 1 racer – high-speed, firing on all cylinders? Or is it more like a pair of burned-out wheels with creaky gears? Because you can refurbish it. Here's how.

BOOST CONCENTRATION

You know the feeling: You're so lost in what you're working on that you don't realise it's 9pm and you've got 42 unread texts. There's a scientific name for this: 'flow'. While you can't will yourself into this awesome zone on demand, with these hacks, you can re-create the brain activity that occurs when you're in the moment.

STOP MULTITASKING Ditch all distractions (like putting your phone away, turning off email, powering off background tunes that have distracting lyrics) for at least 10 to 15 minutes.

Why this works In a 'flow' state, the prefrontal cortex (decision-making spot) is less active, enabling you to focus on a specific goal. (More distractions means more prefrontal cortex buzz and less chance of 'flow'.)

PICK A PROJECT YOU CAN SLAY

Whatever you decide to focus on, aim for an end result you're already familiar with in some capacity. (In other words, don't try your hand at a new language now.)

Why this works If you're working on something fresh, you're in learning mode, which activates your prefrontal cortex – the exact part of the brain that needs to chill out to get into 'flow'.

FIND A PRIVATE SPOT Hole up in a quiet room or a cosy nook at home where nobody will interrupt you.

Why this works When your prefrontal cortex is less excited, it quiets self-analysis. Doing your thing solo offers the best shot of staying in that bubble where you don't wonder what others are thinking.

SHHH, FOR A SEC Stop whatever it is you're doing, close your eyes and just breathe for 30 seconds.

Why this works This helps you slip into an alpha brain state (daydreaming). Alpha brain waves help your mind move freely and can lead to a sense of effortless execution. ►



HOW TO THINK *faster, smarter, harder* THAN BEFORE

Some 86 billion specialised cells – neurons – call your head home and transmit info to other cells. A neuron can have 10,000 connections with others – sending messages that enable you to function. Brain waves transmit between neurons via neurotransmitters, and information moves at a minimum of about 420km per hour. There is a gap between neurons called a synapse, which you can picture as an invisible highway. Every time

you see or learn something, you're more likely to make connections between areas of the brain more efficient than you are to find a new direct route. Fresh synapses can be made and existing synapses can be strengthened. As a baby, you build so many neural connections that by your teens, your brain looks like an aerial view of LA rush hour. You then demolish highways you don't need so you can drive faster on more useful ones (synaptic pruning).



FUEL YOUR BRAIN FEED THE FIRE

Tired of the same-old brain food lists? So is neuro-nutritionist Lisa Mosconi, PhD. "That advice is too general," she says. "Sure, blueberries are good for your brain, but there's only so many you can eat!" The simple truth is that the main nutrient providing energy to the brain is glucose. To get what you need to perform is to eat specific foods that are high in glucose and fibre (aka complex carbs), which feed your neurotransmitters (chemicals your brain relies on) without spiking your blood sugar:

BEST EATS

SPRING ONIONS A whopping 88 per cent of the sugar in this veggie is glucose, which helps your body make your beast-mode neurotransmitter (glutamate). **CHIA SEEDS** These little guys have a high concentration of tryptophan – an essential amino acid your body can't produce on its own – which is made into serotonin, the neurotransmitter that makes you feel happy. **TOFU AND EDAMAME** High in phenylalanine, an amino acid used to make dopamine, the neurotransmitter that surges when you accomplish something, these foods give you a problem-solving lift. (If you prefer meat, go for chicken or fish.)

ALSO TRY

Get a solid dose of magical glucose, minus any sign of a crash, from spring onions, root vegies (carrots, turnips, parsnips), beetroot, milk, yoghurt, pumpkin seeds, spirulina, cacao, peanuts and almonds.





Is brain candy legit?

There are many nootropics – drugs and supplements that purportedly improve cognitive potential, creativity and motivation. Before you buy, brush up on Dr Mosconi’s expert take: **BRAIN SUPPS ARE CONTROVERSIAL. ARE THERE ANY THAT PASS YOUR LITMUS TEST?**

“The nutrients in nootropics do make sense. They often contain B vitamins, which can help memory, and may also include antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids, both of which calm brain-damaging inflammation. But what bothers me is the claims that have no scientific backing.

Sorry, but these supplements can’t ‘hijack your brain’, ‘clear brain fog’ or ‘improve your IQ’. That’s not going to happen. But some of the specific nutrients in the formulations may help you.”

SO IF I’M TAKING A BASIC MULTIVITAMIN, AM I GETTING SOME BRAIN BENEFITS? “If you’re deficient in nutrients that are in your multi, yes. Let’s say you’re anaemic. Lacking red blood cells to carry adequate amounts of oxygen to your body’s tissues can make you feel tired, weak and forgetful. So if the iron in your multi helps with your anaemia, it’ll ease symptoms that may be affecting your brain, too.” ►

THE HABITS THAT *free* YOUR MIND

We know you've heard it before: Your brain needs more sleep, less stress and consistent exercise. But take it from us – this vintage advice is where it's at:

1 DO A SHORT-AND-SWEET SWEAT SESSION Bursts of high-intensity exercise may give you a surge of that incredible brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). If you get these spikes regularly, your brain starts to accumulate it over time, so try to have a 'workout snack' every day – 15 to 20 minutes.

2 SIMPLIFY STRESS RELIEF For many women, just doing less may keep stress in check. So don't forget your downtime. If you despise trying to fit in meditation on top of everything else, quit forcing it and go take that head-clearing kickboxing class you love. It totally counts.

3 CRAM IN LESS AT NIGHT It's harder to fudge our wake-up time, so we steal from bedtime to do an extra hour of work or a load of washing. But most sleep problems stem from staying up too late on some nights but not others. Get consistent sleep.





At risk of Alzheimer's?

"Feeling a little forgetful, and worried you might have early-onset Alzheimer's disease? Relax! You likely don't," says Weiyi Mu, a clinical genetic counsellor.

"It can be easy to think that the minute you start to feel a little fuzzy, you're doomed. Many factors play into whether or not you'll get any form of Alzheimer's or dementia-related illness, and the sum of those may be greater than your genetic odds."

Also, only about five per cent of people with Alzheimer's develop it 'early', meaning younger than 65. So keeping your heart healthy, eating good-for-you foods, and not smoking are all important in fighting back against risk.



WHEN YOU'RE IN OVERDRIVE

Be on the alert for signs you're teetering on the edge of burnout:

You care less about everything

Maybe you decide to phone in a big project for work, or you don't care as much as you should when someone else in the household leaves a pile of sweaty gym clothes on your wooden floor. This could mean your cortisol levels aren't spiking and falling as they should, and when that's out of whack, it can make you a little less engaged with what's going on in your life, for better or worse.

You're harder on yourself than usual

If your inner mean girl starts snarking that you're not doing enough, or that your effort is weak, it may just be because you're fried. But she may have a point: While cortisol puts you in get-stuff-done mode, chronic elevation from stress (caused by cortisol) is not good for your brain.

You try to numb your feelings

Are you relying on an unhealthy habit (booze, sugar, binge-watching) to take the edge off how you really feel? It might be because your brain is craving something that feels good after days and days of no fun. But these quick fixes are likely to do you more harm in the long run.

When you've entered a period of chronic stress (think: two weeks of mental craze), your cortisol levels stay steadily elevated. The glucocorticoid receptors in your hippocampus get overworked, which creates brain fog and memory problems over time. When your stress response has been in this state for weeks, you've officially hit burnout mode. It'll stay that way – unless you reset it by moving your bod, eating healthily, and meditating to help turn off your fight-or-flight response. **P**



flick on your **ANTI-AGEING SWITCH**

Here's everything you need to know about your skin's natural renewal process and how you can boost it – so you can have smoother and younger-looking skin.

By CECILY-ANNA BENNETT

If you could talk to your own skin, what do think it would say? Perhaps, “I’m thirsty – where’s the moisturiser?” Or, “More sunscreen, please!” Your skin works hard for you, constantly renewing its cells – and while this process slows with age, there are things we can do to help it along. Try these dermatologist-approved ingredients, cell-boosting treatments and complexion-perfecting foods to turn back the clock. Your skin will thank you.

Fend off fine lines

ANATOMY OF A WRINKLE

Where do crow's feet, forehead furrows and laugh lines come from? The secret to preventing them is to know how they form. First up, the building blocks of healthy, youthful-looking skin are collagen, which gives skin firmness; elastin, responsible for elasticity and 'bounce'; and glycosaminoglycans (known as GAGs), which keep skin hydrated. From the age of 20, we start producing around one per cent less collagen per year; elastin production slows; and our skin thins and becomes more fragile. This 'intrinsic' ageing is inevitable but subtle. However, there is also another type of ageing: 'extrinsic' ageing is the result of environmental and external damage. Think lifestyle habits, UV damage and exposure to pollution. It's these factors that cause collagen and elastin to significantly diminish, resulting in sagging skin and wrinkles, along with brown spots, dryness and uneven skin tone.

What you can do

It's all about prevention – and it's never too late to start. Shield your skin daily with a good SPF 50+ sunscreen, add an antioxidant, such as vitamin C serum, to bolster protection from UV rays and free radicals, plus try the following tricks to power up your collagen stores:

1 REACH FOR RETINOL

Retinoids are vitamin A derivatives that include retinol and retinaldehyde (available over the counter) and tretinoin (a prescription medication). Scientifically proven to assist skin cell regulation, retinol is one of the most powerful topicals for preventing early signs of ageing, as well as helping to reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles and discolouration. "Retinoids fight ageing, especially sun-related or photo-ageing, by promoting collagen production and also slowing collagen degradation," says dermatologist Dr Karen Koh, from the Australasian College of Dermatologists.

Try Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Retinol Oil, \$42.99, Chemist Warehouse.

2 POP ON PEPTIDES

Studies have found peptides noticeably improve the appearance of aged or photo-damaged skin. "Peptides are composed of amino acids which can imitate the building blocks that make up collagen and elastin," Dr Koh explains. "Some have been shown to stimulate collagen production. These can also assist in preventing or treating fine wrinkles." Try Clear Skincare CP Copper Peptide Serum, \$45, clearskincare.com.au.

3 ZAP WRINKLES WITH LASERS

Laser therapy works by heating the cells that produce collagen (the fibroblasts), thereby speeding up production, and also heating the collagen to 'shrink' it and make it tighter, explains dermal therapist Dr Giulia D'Anna. "This kind of laser is called non-ablative, as there is no removal of skin surface," she explains. "The perfect thing about non-ablative laser is that it works from the inside out. Most people need around three to six treatments to really start to notice a difference, but this does depend upon how many wrinkles you have and also how deep they are." Best suited to people with a fair to medium skin tone, you can expect to pay around \$250 per session.

4 PUT A RAINBOW ON YOUR PLATE

Studies have found that the polyphenols in green tea as well as lutein – a carotenoid in leafy greens, broccoli and peas – can inhibit the natural enzymes that break down collagen. Meanwhile, phytonutrients in orange and yellow fruits and vegetables – oranges, pumpkin, carrots and orange capsicums – help improve skin vibrancy, while antioxidant-rich fruits – such as raspberries and pomegranates – contain ellagic acid, an antioxidant found to reduce collagen breakdown in animal studies. ►

Fast fact

As much as 80 per cent of the damage that makes our skin look older is caused by UV exposure.

Stay sun-spot free

HOW PIGMENTATION HAPPENS

The main culprit is the sun. As UV rays hit your skin, they switch on an enzyme called tyrosinase that lives in your pigment-producing cells. These cells (called melanocytes) kick into action, creating pigment which travels to the top layers of your skin. Once dark spots have taken up residence, they're constantly replaced by new pigment (sort of like a stubborn conveyor belt of sun-spot delivery), which is why fading them is such a tricky task.

What you can do

There are a few effective ingredients and practices you can try to slow down your face's pigment-making factory. Try these to get the best results:

1 USE VITAMIN C

Numerous studies have shown vitamin C (aka ascorbic acid) improves skin texture and tone, boosts collagen production, brightens the complexion, fades dark spots and helps fend off photo-ageing due to sun exposure. "I recommend using this every morning to help reduce the effects of the sun, since vitamin C is a potent anti-oxidant, but it also helps to brighten the skin, too," advises Dr D'Anna. Try **Revision Skincare Vitamin C Lotion 30%**, \$176, envogueskin.com.au.

2 GIVE NIACINAMIDE A GO

Also known as vitamin B3, niacinamide is a water-soluble vitamin that works to help visibly improve the appearance of enlarged pores, uneven skin tone, fine lines and wrinkles.

"It regulates cell metabolism and regeneration and at just five per cent concentration can improve elasticity of the skin, redness and even out pigmentation," Dr Koh says.

3 EXFOLIATE

Pigmentation sits on the top layers of the skin, so a good exfoliating treatment can reduce the appearance of sun spots. You have two options: manual exfoliation, using a scrub or cleansing brush; or chemical exfoliation with AHAs, such as glycolic or lactic acids, which 'eat' away the dead skin cells. But don't over-exfoliate and cause skin sensitivity – give yourself a scrub only once a week.

4 WEAR SUNSCREEN

Slather on the SPF 50+ – even when it's overcast. As much as 80 per cent of the damage to our skin that makes us look older is caused by UV exposure. Even if you don't burn, the rays responsible for ageing cut straight through windows and clouds. The good news is it's never too late to start protecting yourself. Try **La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL Ultra Light Fluid SPF 50+** \$29.99, Priceline.

5 GO HIGH-TECH WITH LASERS

"Hands down, the easiest and most effective option for age spots is IPL (Intense Pulsed Light), which uses light to target the colour brown," says plastic surgeon Dr Anthony Youn. "This destroys the pigment, causing the age spot to turn darker and slough off after about a week." Most people require upwards of four treatments for optimal effect, but it's largely painless and requires no downtime.

Get smooth & soft

HOW ROUGH TEXTURE HAPPENS

When we're young, our skin has strong cells, fatty acids and natural oils that keep everything smooth and hydrated. As we get older and produce less oils, our skin becomes drier. On top of that, the natural shedding of our skin cells slows down, so it's a recipe for a sandpapery complexion absolutely none of us asked for.

What you can do

Simply add back the lost lipids and slough off the dead cells to reinforce the strength of your skin barrier and bring back your youthful glow:

1 LOOK FOR AHAs

Alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs), also known as fruit acids, work by loosening the bonds between the dead skin cells and the fresh new skin underneath. Dr Koh says, "AHAs can be helpful for treating skin dryness, elasticity and pigmentation, stimulating the exfoliation of cells from the top layers of the skin, but also increasing skin regeneration and hydration. The most well-known AHA is glycolic acid." Try Alpha-H Liquid Gold, \$59.95, adorebeauty.com.au.

2 GRAB THE RIGHT MOISTURISER

Hydration is essential for skin to look bouncy and fresh. Choose a moisturiser that contains lipids, fats or ceramides to replenish lost moisture and support healthy skin structure. Try CeraVe Facial Moisturising Lotion, \$21.99, Chemist Warehouse.

3 GO NUTS

Nuts and seeds contain linoleic acid, which works wonders for dry skin. One study found that a daily dose of half a teaspoon of omega-3-rich flaxseed oil boosted skin hydration by as much as 39 per cent after 12 weeks.



Tighten up

WHY DOES SKIN SAG?

One word: gravity. It's a fact of life that what goes up must eventually come down – and that applies to our skin as well. As our collagen and elastin breaks down, our skin loses plumpness and begins to drop.

What you can do

Our advice? Love the skin you're in – topical products don't do much for this type of skin ageing. But if you feel inclined to tighten and tone, cosmetic injectables and certain treatments can make a difference:

1 FIRM WITH FILLERS

To fill lost volume in your face – especially the folds around the nose and mouth – a dermatologist can inject one of the many different types of hyaluronic acid (HA) filler on the market, like Restylane, which lasts 8-10 months, or Stylage which lasts 12-18 months. "When we inject HA, our skin begins to look younger again because the amount of water naturally held in the skin increases," Dr D'Anna says. "This means that the cells communicate better, carry nutrients to the skin surface better and also lose waste more efficiently." Just make sure

that you go to a trusted therapist. The injectables industry isn't regulated, so you want to be in experienced hands.

2 TURN UP THE HEAT

Non-invasive treatments like Thermage (using radiofrequency) and Ulthera (using ultrasound) use intense heat energy to induce contraction of the skin, tightening its overall appearance. Dr D'Anna says that ultrasound can penetrate deeper than radiofrequency, so technically will give a better result. "Both treatments can become quite intense as the treatment progresses," she says. "It's not uncommon to require heavy painkillers." Ulthera is newer to the market, and some clinics charge up to \$3000 for a full face treatment. "An alternative treatment option is Venus Viva radiofrequency treatment," Dr D'Anna says. "It provides the equivalent of a fractional laser treatment, but also sends radiofrequency heat energy down into the skin, which means we get rid of surface blemishes and wrinkles with the fractionated part of the treatment, but we also tighten the skin deeper down, too." And at around \$650, it's more wallet-friendly. **P**

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Animal encounters

A wildlife encounter may be just the mind and body break you need. **Ute Junker** shares the awe and power of connecting with nature's majestic beasts.



GO ON SAFARI

in the Masai Mara, Kenya

It's no surprise that the elephant is so big. That's what elephants are known for, after all. No, what is really striking about this mighty animal, standing a metre or so away from our safari vehicle and looming high above it, is how it impacts on all your senses: There is the ripping sound as its trunk effortlessly tears up some grass by the roots; the warm air that gusts across you as it flaps its great ears; the dusty, musty aroma that you breathe in and that, we soon realise, is the smell of wild elephant.

Until now, I had no idea that elephants have a distinctive smell. But there's nothing like a safari experience to up your animal IQ. And when it comes to safari, few places can match Kenya's Masai Mara. Thanks to the Mara's combination of rolling plains and verdant bush, there are countless opportunities to see a huge range of wild animals in their natural habitat.

We see giraffes grazing on the canopies of acacia trees, hippos cooling off in the river, young antelopes suckling at their mothers' bellies. That's just the start. We also see large groups of zebras, elegant cranes, slouching hyenas. Then there are the adorable youngsters, such as the litter of warthog pups trotting after their parent, whose tail – held ramrod straight in the air – functions as an unmistakable follow-me call.

Among the most thrilling encounters are our close-up experiences of the big cats, all muscled feline grace: leopards prowling along a rocky slope, cheetahs sheltering in the long grass, a pride of lions sprawled out together, adults dozing while the youngsters play lazily with each other.

One of the things I enjoy most is the sense of anticipation at the start of a game drive. You know you are going to see something memorable; you just never know what. As you drive through the early morning light, or into the lengthening afternoon shadows, you relax into an alert but mellow state. There might be an astonishing animal hiding behind that tussock over there – or there might not. Your senses are engaged, listening for animal calls, scanning the mid-distance for signs of movement, savouring the simple pleasure of the breeze playing across your face. It's a surprisingly blissful way to be.

HOW TO DO IT Bench Africa offers a three-day stay at the Mara Sarova Tented Camp, from \$1,885 per person twin share, including twice-daily game drives. See benchafrika.com.au ►



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A baby giraffe is affectionately nuzzled by doting mum; A lioness surveys her kingdom from above; Impala graze in the savanna; Zebras huddle together in a group; Inquisitive cubs peek out of the tall grass.



A GORILLA ENCOUNTER *in Rwanda*

Half an hour can be a long time in the jungle, especially when you are scrabbling your way uphill. Branches slap your face, tree roots try to trip you up, thorny vines try to pierce your clothing. Imagine how much worse it would be if we didn't have our porters cutting a path in front of us with their machetes.

This is the reality of gorilla trekking in Rwanda's Virunga Mountains – but anyone who has done it will tell you that it is well worth the effort. The mountains are home to 11 separate gorilla families, which constantly move through the jungle, seeking fresh food. Local trackers keep an eye on their movements, but you can still expect to have a bit of a hike before you encounter these great apes.

For our group, it's 30 minutes before we meet our gorillas. We are moving single file and I am near the front of the line, so I'm one of the first to see the dark shape in the bushes that turns out to be two young gorillas curled together, having a nap. Moving on into the clearing, we're suddenly surrounded by gorillas – a mother grooming her

baby, two youngsters playing with each other, some more mature adults methodically stripping the skin off bamboo to get at the fresh shoots that are their preferred food.

I freeze for a moment, startled by the nearness of these creatures: some of them are just two or three metres away. Accustomed to being visited by groups of humans, none of them are perturbed by our presence. Most of them check us out briefly before returning to whatever they were doing.

The younger gorillas, just like teenagers everywhere, are daredevils, and test themselves by repeatedly edging towards us. We've been briefed about what to do if this happens. Direct contact is a no-no, given the potential dangers for both apes and humans. As they get close, we make the gorilla warning call that we've been taught, and the youngsters back off – only to try again a few minutes later.

The gorillas have clearly settled in for the morning, so we join them on the forest floor, watching as they feed and play. At one point, the silverback lumbers past on all fours, his back imposingly broad, his arms terrifyingly strong. He heads straight for a patch of thick vines and starts rummaging around for more food. I breathe a sigh of relief that he has completely ignored me.

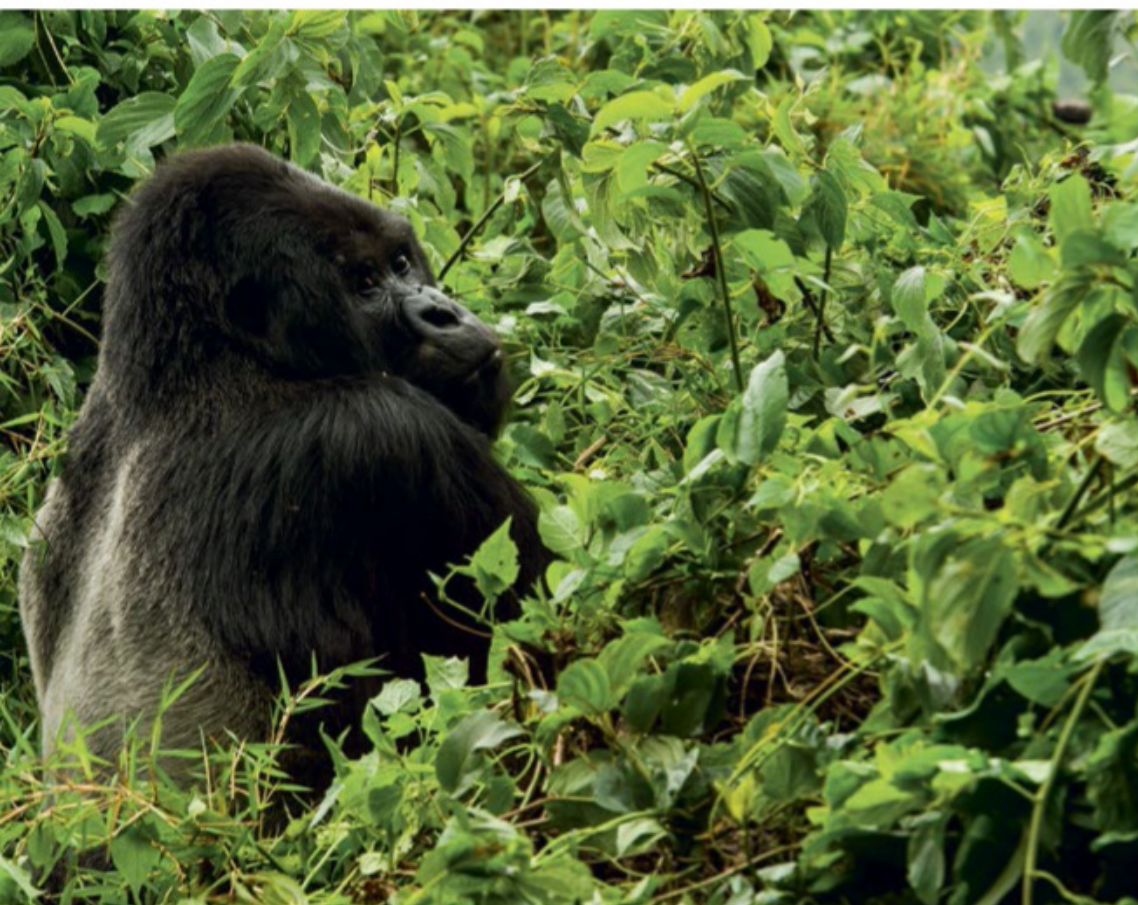
Most endearing of all are the babies, nestled securely in their mothers' arms. They are delightfully curious, craning their necks to catch a glimpse of us before pulling their heads back in when they catch us looking back.

There's a soft groan of disappointment when our guide tells us it's time to leave. Visitors are limited to an hour with the gorillas, to minimise the impact on the animals. Let me tell you – an hour in the jungle can simply fly by.

HOW TO DO IT A stay at Bisate Lodge in the Virunga Mountains starts at US\$1,575 per person per night twin share. Gorilla trekking permits cost US\$1,500 per person. For more details, go to classicsafaricompany.com.au ►



CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: A silverback gorilla deep in the Rwandan jungle; Methodically stripping the skin off bamboo to get to the fresh shoots; An adult gorilla lumbers through a clearing watched by a delighted tourist taking photos.



A large gorilla is sitting on the forest floor, looking towards the camera. In the background, a person is standing and taking a photo of the gorilla. The forest is filled with tall bamboo stalks and green foliage.

Natural high

Getting up close to gorillas in the jungle makes you feel a sense of childlike wonder.

**Expert
tip**

Go wild, feel better

Desperately in need of relaxation? Then a wildlife encounter may be just what the doctor ordered. One of the best ways to give your mind a rest from its daily demands and routines, the work and family deadlines that govern so much of our lives, is to get out into the wilderness and give yourself over to a different rhythm. Time flows differently when you are watching dolphins arc their way through the waves, or gorillas affectionately grooming each other. Absorbed in the entrancing sight, your brain goes into a state that feels very close to meditation. That's not the only way that animal encounters make you feel great, either. The unfamiliar natural environment stimulates your senses, grounding you in the here-and-now. Add in the sense of childlike wonder that accompanies these experiences, a release of endorphins that makes you feel wonderfully alive, and you have a true natural high.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Bottlenose dolphins doing
acrobatics; A beach in
Rockingham, WA; Crested
terns on Penguin Island in
Rockingham; A dolphin
arcing through the waves;
A Wild Encounters boat
takes swimmers to snorkel
with the friendly wild dolphins.



PHOTOGRAPHY: GARRY NORRIS

SWIM WITH DOLPHINS *in Western Australia*

It's a little deflating to realise that we humans aren't the most interesting species on earth. We're so accustomed to being at the centre of things that, when wild animals ignore us – as they often do, once they have ascertained that we pose no threat – it can be a bit of a blow to the ego.

That doesn't happen with dolphins. Few wild animals take as much joy in interacting with humans as dolphins do. In some locations, such as Rockingham outside Perth, Western Australia, they actively seek out the opportunity to swim with humans, clearly taking as much joy in the experience as we do.

To swim with some of the 200-plus bottlenose dolphins that live in the waters surrounding Rockingham, you'll need to sign up for a tour. As the boat heads out into the bay, you'll get a briefing in how to use your snorkel. Don't be nervous about swimming in deep water. You'll have a belt around your waist connecting you to your tour leader, so there's no chance that you'll drift off.

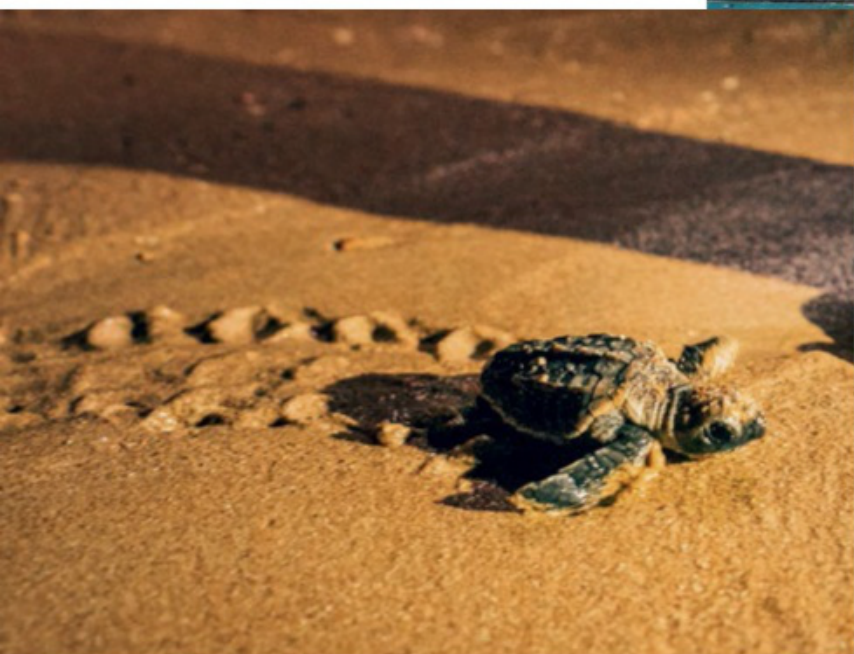
Because these are wild dolphins, there is no predicting how your encounter will turn out. The creatures may be feeling playful, in which case you'll see them cavorting nearby. They may be hunting, in which case you'll be stunned by how fast they can move.

Or they may be having a chat. Yes, really. Dolphins are surprisingly vocal creatures – they whistle and squeak, click and bark. When a bunch of them are vocalising at once, it's an extraordinary chorus of sound. Scientists say these noisy confabs are generally a sign that a group of dolphins is making a communal decision: for instance, whether it's time to go and chase some fish.

Being in the water this close to these endearing creatures is an exhilarating experience. The good news is that you'll generally have several opportunities to hang out in the water near these mammals. There's no doubt that they enjoy the interaction. In fact, as you head back to the shore, they may even accompany the boat for a while, porpoising alongside as if to bid you farewell.

HOW TO DO IT Perth Wildlife Encounters offers swimming with dolphins encounters at Rockingham Bay, with transfers available from Perth. From \$225 per person departing Perth. See dolphins.com.au ►





WITNESS A TURTLE HATCHING *in Queensland*

If you have ever swum near a turtle as it moves effortlessly through water, changing direction or picking up speed with a barely noticeable flick of a flipper, you will have observed that turtles are loners. Many marine creatures seek safety in numbers, from shoaling fish to pods of seals, but turtles travel solo, each one following its own path through the vast oceans of our planet.

This applies from the moment they are born. As soon as they push their way out of their sandy nest, turtle hatchlings are programmed to head for the water and strike out on their own. Witnessing this irresistible drive, a thing stronger than reason, larger than thought, is a remarkable illustration of the survival instinct.

If you want to experience this for yourself, be aware that it may involve a little waiting. While hatching season is clearly defined – in Queensland, it takes place between January and March – and hatching always takes place at night, there is no predicting exactly what time the hatchlings will emerge. It may be shortly after nightfall; it may be after midnight. Such are the rhythms of nature.

Volunteers patrol the beach at Mon Repos, near Bundaberg, looking for movement. When they see that things are underway, you will be led to where the action is. Bright lights are banned, as they can confuse the turtles. As your eyes adjust to the darkness, things become clearer.

At first, you may just notice a small movement: a single tiny flipper poking up out of the sand here, then a head emerging there. But turtles are good layers, some depositing up to 200 eggs in a nest, and it doesn't take long before large numbers of tiny turtles are cascading out of the nest, erupting from the sand with a force that seems extraordinary for such a tiny creature.

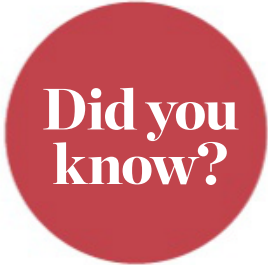
Follow them as they head towards the water and you'll be amazed by their speed. The tiny flippers move as if battery-operated, propelling the hatchlings forward, towards the surging water. Instinctively, they know that they need to move fast, if they want to survive.

The harsh reality is that most of these adorable creatures will meet an early end. Their soft shells make them tempting meals for predatory species, including sea birds, crabs and fish. It's estimated that only one in 1,000 will reach maturity. Their best bet is to find a bed of soft seaweed, where they can find both shelter and food. Seeing these tiny creatures throwing themselves towards their uncertain future fills you with a sense of how fragile life is, and how we should cherish it wherever we find it.

HOW TO DO IT Mon Repos, in Queensland, supports the largest concentration of nesting marine turtles in eastern Australia. Ranger-led turtle encounters take place at the Mon Repos Turtle Centre from November to March (nesting November to January; hatching January to March). Prices start at \$27 for adults, \$14 for children. Bookings essential. See bundabergregion.org/turtles/mon-repos-turtle-encounter **P**



ABOVE: A turtle nest protection site at Mon Repos turtle rookery in Queensland; LEFT AND FACING PAGE: Newly hatched baby turtles scurry along the beach to the water; TOP: A turtle who made it to adulthood finds shelter under some coral.



The harsh reality is that only one in 1,000 turtle hatchlings will reach maturity.



Let the Rosicrucians help you find your deeper Self

In the depths of your being resides your deeper Self, an aspect of your being which breathes in calm reflection the very rhythm of the universe. It is in touch with all things and communicates with all that matters for life on Earth. It seeks to instruct and guide its human ward how to live a good life, and does so with care for its wellbeing, and above all, with love and compassion for all expressions of life.

Your Self knows why you are here and what you are meant to accomplish in this incarnation. It knows what your chances are of attaining the goals you have set for yourself, and whether they are beyond your reach or fully attainable. And it assists you to reach the attainable goals with care and attention to the minutest details.

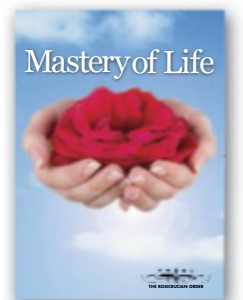
Your deeper Self is a veritable slumbering genius, eager to help you express your hidden talents with greater refinement and sophistication than you have ever considered possible. The most productive thing we can ever do is to find and communicate with this Self.

For millennia, seekers of universal truths have known of the existence of a kernel of perfection lying dormant in every person, manifesting supreme confidence, calmness, maturity

and wisdom. This deeper Self is called by Rosicrucians, the 'Inner Master', for it has in abundance, qualities of refinement, high purpose and spiritual maturity we would expect only of the most accomplished of humans.

You can discover how to access this high level of achievement and embark upon the definitive, true direction of your life simply by learning how to contact and regularly commune with your deeper Self. If you are searching for a way of accomplishing the most fulfilling and rewarding things in life, in a fair and ethical way, then learn from the ineffable wisdom of that inner perfection.

To find out more about the Rosicrucian Order and how it can help you to achieve your most treasured goals, visit our website www.amorc.org.au or contact us for a free copy of our introductory booklet *The Mastery of Life*, by phoning **1300 88 11 35** or email mastery@amorc.org.au



THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER IS NON-PROFIT, NON-RELIGIOUS, NON-POLITICAL

food

NUTRITIOUS & DELICIOUS

Healthy eating, made easy

*Pea & fetta
fritters with
labneh will hit
the spot
(page 132)*



***On the menu
this month ...***

124

Enjoy easy, low-carb dinners
that are light and luscious

128

Our vegetarian meals are
bursting with herbs and spices

135

Whip up high-fibre energy
bars for an afternoon snack



Easy low-carb dinners

These light, healthy meals won't have you slaving long and hard in the kitchen – proof that simplicity can be delicious!

ANTIPASTO CHICKEN PASTA

SERVES 4 HANDS-ON TIME 10 minutes
COOK TIME 15 minutes

120g small dried low-GI or wholemeal pasta shells
400g lean chicken breast fillet, diced and seasoned with pepper
1 x 120g packet chopped mixed kale mix
100g mixed Tuscan antipasto, roughly chopped
100g baby bocconcini, torn
1 cup small basil leaves

1. Cook the pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water for 8-10 minutes or until just tender.

Drain, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125ml) of the cooking water. Meanwhile, heat a large, deep, non-stick frying pan over high heat. Add the chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8-10 minutes or until golden and cooked through.

2. Add kale mix and antipasto to the chicken. Cook, tossing, for 1-2 minutes or until the kale starts to wilt, adding a little reserved cooking water to loosen, if needed. Divide among serving bowls. Top with bocconcini and basil and sprinkle with black pepper.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1315kJ/315 cal. Protein 31.8g. Carbs 21.9g. Sat fat 4.2g. Fibre 4.4g. Sodium 361mg.

RAINBOW SALMON WITH RICOTTA

SERVES 4 HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes
COOK TIME 10 minutes

*120g small dried low-GI or wholemeal
elbow macaroni*
*400g drained tinned red salmon, broken into
chunks (see note)*
2 tablespoons chilli and garlic pesto
1 x 375g packet simply stir-fry rainbow vegetables
440g reduced-fat fresh ricotta
finely grated zest and juice of 1 large lemon

1 Cook the macaroni in a large saucepan of boiling water for 8-10 minutes or until just

tender. Drain, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125ml) of the cooking water. Transfer to a large bowl.

2 Add the remaining ingredients and gently toss to combine, adding a little of the reserved cooking water to loosen, if needed. Season with freshly ground black pepper and serve.

Note: Because you will be draining off quite a bit of liquid (which adds weight to the tins of tuna), you will need 2 x 415g tins of salmon to have the required quantity for this recipe. Store the leftover salmon in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1772kJ/424 cal. Protein 36.3g.
Carbs 23g. Sat fat 5.3g. Fibre 6.8g. Sodium 247mg.



TUNA PESTO PASTA SALAD

SERVES 4 HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes
COOK TIME 10 minutes

*120g dried low-GI or wholemeal spaghetti,
broken into 3-4 cm lengths*
2 zucchini, halved lengthways, sliced
1 bunch broccolini, trimmed, stalks halved
400g drained tinned tuna in springwater (see note)
2 tablespoons fresh basil pesto
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
100g parmesan, grated
250g cherry tomatoes, halved

1 Cook the spaghetti in a large saucepan of boiling water for 6 minutes. Add the zucchini

and broccolini and cook for a further 2 minutes. Drain, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125ml) of the cooking water. Transfer to a large bowl.

2 Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl and toss to combine, adding some of the reserved cooking water to loosen, if needed. Season with freshly ground black pepper and serve warm.

Note: Because you will be draining off quite a bit of liquid (which adds weight to the tins of tuna), you will need 2 x 425g tins of tuna to have the required quantity for this recipe. Store the leftover tuna in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1790kJ/428 cal. Protein 41.2g. Carbs 22.3g. Sat fat 6.7g. Fibre 6.6g. Sodium 724mg.



VEGETABLE FRYING-PAN PIE

SERVES 4 HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes
COOK TIME 20 minutes

2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 x 400g packet traditional vegetables stir-fry mix
 8 x 55g eggs
 200ml low-fat milk
 4 x 35g slices multigrain bread, cut into 2cm pieces
 60g aged cheddar, crumbled

1 Heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan with a flameproof handle over high heat. Add the vegetables and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until golden and heated through.
2 Whisk together the eggs and milk, then season with freshly ground black pepper. Pour over the vegetables in the pan. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring gently, for 2 minutes, then leave to cook untouched for 8 minutes or until the egg has set but is still a little wet on top. Heat the oven grill to high.
3 Combine the bread and cheese in a bowl, then sprinkle over the egg mixture. Place under the grill for 3-5 minutes or until the egg is set and the top is golden and crispy. Take to the table and serve straight from the pan.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1717kJ/411 cal.
 Protein 24.9g. Carbs 17g. Sat fat 7.7g.
 Fibre 5.7g. Sodium 455mg.



Recipes extracted from
*The CSIRO Low-Carb Diet
 Quick & Easy* by Professor
 Grant Brinkworth and Dr
 Pennie Taylor. Pan Macmillan
 Australia, RRP \$34.99.





Plant-based meals

Packed with the flavour of fresh herbs and spices, these easy veggie-based meals were created by Paul West, host of *River Cottage Australia*.

SWEET & SOUR BROCCOLINI & CANNELLINI BEAN SALAD

SERVES 4 HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes
COOK TIME 10 minutes

Salt (see recipe method)

1 bunch of broccolini, ends trimmed

olive oil, for cooking

1 red onion, finely sliced

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

100g raisins

400g can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

*½ bunch of flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked
and roughly chopped*

50g parmesan

1 Fill a large saucepan with water and bring it to a rolling boil over high heat. Season the water generously with salt, enough to make it as salty

as the sea. Add the broccolini and cook for 2 minutes or until the stems are still slightly crunchy. Remove the broccolini and plunge it into cold water to stop it cooking.

2 Heat a splash of olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and gently fry for 2 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes or until softened.

3 Drain the broccolini and add it to the pan, along with the raisins, cannellini beans and lemon zest and juice. Give everything a good toss. Check and adjust the seasoning and add a little more olive oil if the mixture seems a bit dry.

4 Scatter over the parsley and give everything one last mix, then transfer the whole lot to a serving bowl. Finely grate the parmesan over the top and serve.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1088kJ/260 cal. Protein 12.8g. Carbs 30.7g. Sat fat 2.9g. Fibre 9.2g. Sodium 416mg.

These fritters contain more than a quarter of your daily fibre needs to support gut health.

PEA & FETTA FRITTERS WITH LABNEH

Recipe on page 132



**GREEN BEAN & LENTIL
SALAD WITH DRIED
FIGS, FETTA & HERBS**

Recipe on page 132



PEA & FETTA FRITTERS
WITH LABNEH

SERVES 4
HANDS-ON TIME 20 minutes
COOK TIME 20 minutes

salt (see recipe method)
400g shelled peas (fresh is best but you could use frozen, too)
2 spring onions, green and white parts finely chopped
3 eggs, lightly beaten
100g fetta, finely crumbled
1 tablespoon plain flour
2 tablespoons roughly chopped mint leaves
2 tablespoons roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
salt and black pepper, to season
olive oil, for cooking and dressing
2 handfuls of sprouts or microgreens
200g labneh
lemon wedges, to serve

1 Fill a medium saucepan with water, add a good pinch of salt and bring it to the boil over high heat. Plunge the peas into the boiling water and cook for 3 minutes or until tender. Drain well and place in a large mixing bowl.
2 Roughly mash the peas with a fork (I like to do mine about halfway between whole and pureed), then add the spring onion, egg, fetta, flour, mint and parsley. Season with a little salt and pepper and mix gently to bring it all together.
3 Heat a large frying pan over medium heat and add a generous splash of olive oil. Plop a heaped tablespoon of the fritter mixture into the pan, then use the back of the spoon to flatten it into a 1cm-thick disc. Repeat until the pan is full but not overcrowded (you will probably need to cook the fritters in a couple of batches).
4 Cook the fritters for 4 minutes on each side or until golden and cooked through, then pop them on a tray and cover to keep warm while you cook the rest. You should have about 20 fritters in all. Lightly dress the sprouts or greens with olive oil. Divide the fritters among serving plates and serve with the labneh, sprouts or greens and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

NUTRITION (per serve) 1332kJ/319 cal.
Protein 19.3g. Carbs 18.1g. Sat fat 6.2g.
Fibre 7.4g. Sodium 471mg.

GREEN BEAN & LENTIL
SALAD WITH DRIED
FIGS, FETTA & HERBS

SERVES 4
HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes
COOK TIME 5 minutes

salt (see recipe method)
400g green beans, topped and tailed
400g can brown lentils, drained and rinsed
12 dried figs, finely sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
salt and black pepper, to serve
200g fetta
1/2 bunch of flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked and roughly chopped
1/2 bunch of mint, leaves picked and roughly chopped

1 Fill a large saucepan with water and bring it to a rapid boil over high heat. Season the water generously with salt, enough to make it as salty as the sea.
2 Add the beans to the boiling water and cook for just 2 minutes – you want them to still have a bit of crunch. Remove the beans and plunge them into cold water to stop them cooking. Once the beans are cool, tip them into a colander and give them a good shake to remove any excess water.
3 In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooked beans and the lentils, figs, olive oil and lemon juice. Season with a little salt and pepper and give everything a good toss, then transfer the lot to a serving bowl. Crumble the fetta over the top, scatter with the herbs and serve.

NUTRITION (per serve) 2217kJ/530 cal.
Protein 22.3g. Carbs 51.8g. Sat fat 9.2g.
Fibre 17.1g. Sodium 582mg.

SILVERBEET WITH
SPICED CHICKPEAS
& ALMONDS

SERVES 2
HANDS-ON TIME 20 minutes
COOK TIME 10 minutes

olive oil, for cooking
1 bunch of silverbeet (about 500g), stalks removed and finely chopped, leaves shredded
1 onion, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 long red chilli, finely chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon tomato paste
400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
salt and black pepper, to season
250g (1 cup) natural Greek-style yoghurt
1/2 bunch of coriander, leaves picked and roughly torn
60g (1/2 cup) slivered almonds, toasted

1 Heat a splash of olive oil in a deep heavy-based frying pan over medium heat. Toss in the silverbeet stalk and the onion and cook for 3 minutes or until softened. Add the garlic, chilli and ground spices and cook for another couple of minutes until aromatic.
2 Stir in the tomato paste and cook for another 2 minutes or until the paste has darkened and become aromatic. Pop the chickpeas and shredded silverbeet leaves in the pan and cook for 3 minutes or until the leaves have softened. Finally, stir in the lemon zest and juice and season to taste. Spoon the silverbeet mixture into two bowls and top with yoghurt, coriander and almonds.

NUTRITION (per serve) 2737kJ/655 cal.
Protein 31.2g. Carbs 46g. Sat fat 6.1g.
Fibre 21.1g. Sodium 1101mg.

**SILVERBEET WITH
SPICED CHICKPEAS
& ALMONDS**

Recipe opposite



Recipes extracted
from *The Edible
Garden Cookbook
& Growing Guide* by
Paul West. Published
by Plum, RRP \$39.99.
Photography by
Chris Middleton.

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Raise the bar

With healthy dried fruits, oats, nut butter and pepitas, these high-fibre bars are perfect for a snack.

FRUIT-AND-NUT BARS

MAKES 12 bars
HANDS-ON TIME 15 minutes, plus freezing
COOK TIME 5 minutes

1 cup pitted dates
¼ cup peanut or almond butter
¼ cup honey
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup roasted unsalted almonds, roughly chopped
½ cup old-fashioned rolled oats
¾ cup dried fruit (cranberries, raisins, sliced apricots)
¼ cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)

1 Line a 20cm square pan with non-stick foil, leaving an overhang on all sides.
2 In a food processor, chop dates until they form a ball. Transfer to a bowl.
3 In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt nut butter, honey and vanilla, stirring occasionally, for 1 minute or until combined. Add to the bowl with dates, then combine.
4 Fold in almonds, oats, dried fruit and pumpkin seeds. Press mixture into prepared pan and freeze for 30 minutes or until sliceable. Cut into 12 bars. Store in the fridge.

NUTRITION (per serve) 943kJ/226 cal. Sat fat 1.3g. Carbs 25.3g. Sugar 22.5g. Fibre 3.6g.

GROCERY GURU

Ready-made meals

The range of prepared meals in supermarket fridges and freezers keeps growing. Our dietitian, **Melissa Meier**, helps you choose the best.

Whether you're run off your feet, out of fresh ingredients or just don't feel like cooking, a ready-made meal can be a life-saver. While frozen dinners have been around for years, there's now also a growing band of refrigerator options providing tasty meals at the ping of a microwave. Some score top marks for nutrition, while others have your total day's kilojoules in that one small pack!

The secret to making the best choices is to look for meals that have a good serve of colourful vegies (so mac 'n' cheese is not on our shopping list!). You're also looking for a good portion of protein from ingredients

like chicken, beef or beans, as well as slow-burning carbs. Think: more sweet potato and wholemeal pasta, less pastry and white rice. This combination of protein and carbs provides the satisfying feeling of fullness, so you won't get hungry again half an hour later.

Old-style frozen dinners, like pizzas, tended to be loaded with sodium and saturated fat, but there are newer ready-made options that are similar to a home-cooked dinner – especially in the refrigerator section. Stand-out brands are WW Healthy Kitchen and Woolworths Balanced Nutrition – most of their meals get my tick of approval. Here are five of the most nutritious ready-made meals on offer:



Spice it up

WW Healthy Kitchen Peri Peri Chicken

Tender chicken breast, sweet potato mash and just the right amount of spice. This tasty meal provides two-and-a-half serves of veg (half your daily target) and is also gluten-free.

Per 400g serve: 1580kJ (378 cal), 56g protein, 16g carbs, 1.6g sat fat, 13.6g fibre, 452mg sodium



Plant power

Lean Cuisine Veggie Moroccan Tagine

Lentils and chickpeas are two of the feature ingredients in this vegetable-packed dish, which provides gut-loving fibre, protein to build muscles and antioxidants to fight disease.

Per 300g serve: 1100kJ (263 cal), 13.4g protein, 0.4g sat fat, 12.8g fibre, 622mg sodium



Light & lovely

Woolworths Balanced Nutrition Breadless Chicken Parmigiana

With three-and-a-half serves of veg, along with loads of protein and fibre, it's no wonder this fridge meal has earned itself a four-and-a-half star health rating. It's tasty, too!

Per 350g serve: 1270kJ (304 cal), 23.1g protein, 2.4g sat fat, 20.3g carbs, 11.6g fibre, 350mg sodium



Mexican fiesta

Fitness Outcomes Open Chicken Burrito

This dish boasts a clean and simple ingredients list: free-range chicken, vegetables, brown rice – that's about it! It's also gluten-free, dairy-free and contains no preservatives.

Per 350g serve: 1770kJ (424 cal), 30g protein, 3g sat fat, 45.2g carbs, 7.5g fibre, 688mg sodium



Winning classic

Coles Classics Lentil Cottage Pie

With almost two-thirds of your daily fibre needs in a single serve, this is a goodie for gut health. It's nicely portioned and rich enough in flavour to hit the spot without overdoing it.

Per 400g serve: 1607kJ (385 cal), 12.4g protein, 3.2g sat fat, 42.4g carbs, 16g fibre, 640mg sodium



YOUR SHOPPING GUIDE

Keep this in your wallet and use it at the supermarket

Calories: Your target is 2300kJ (550 cal) or less. If you want to lose weight, then opt for roughly 1500kJ (360 cal)

Salt: no more than 700 milligrams of sodium per serve

Sat fat: Under 7 grams of saturated fat per serve

Protein: Around 20 grams of muscle-building protein will help you feel satisfied

Fibre: At least 5 grams of gut-loving fibre – this helps keep hunger pangs at bay.



It pays to look at the nutrition info panel – some meals have your total day's kilojoules in one small pack!

Drug **ALERT**

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Prevention Profiled

Smart ideas for your healthy lifestyle...

A beautiful complexion

Jane Iredale's Beyond Matte Liquid Foundation, RRP \$79, is a clean, weightless, multitasking three-in-one primer, concealer and foundation with buildable, stay-put coverage and a natural-looking semi-matte finish. Formulated with plant-based ingredients that nourish the skin, it's available in 18 self-adjusting shades. It's also 100 per cent vegan and always cruelty-free. For stockists, visit janeiredale.com.au.



Clay & crystal face mask

Immersa's naturally formed Australian volcanic crystal clay mask combines skincare benefits with a home spa experience like no other mask on the market. Lava Clay is clean skincare and is 100 per cent naturally formed – it contains no fillers or unwanted ingredients. Rich montmorillonite clay and micro crystals work to gently exfoliate, deeply cleanse, remove nasties and revitalise the appearance of your skin. RRP from \$42-\$72. Visit immersa.com.au/



Amazingly relaxing

Scientifically formulated using natural ingredients, Amazing Oils' new Sleep Lotion combines organically sourced Australian magnesium with the relaxing effects of lavender and chamomile. Formulated in a luxurious cream, the fast-acting lotion applies effortlessly to the legs and feet to help calm the brain, quiet a racing mind and relax the nervous system. Prompting a good night's sleep, the Magnesium Pro Sleep Lotion is Australian-made, vegan and pharmaceutical grade. RRP \$34.95 for 125ml. Available at amazingoils.com.au



Prevention Profiled

Guilt-free indulgence

Silly Yaks' range of pies (RRP \$6.50-\$6.95) are 100 per cent Australian-made, and 100 per cent wheat, gluten and nut-free.

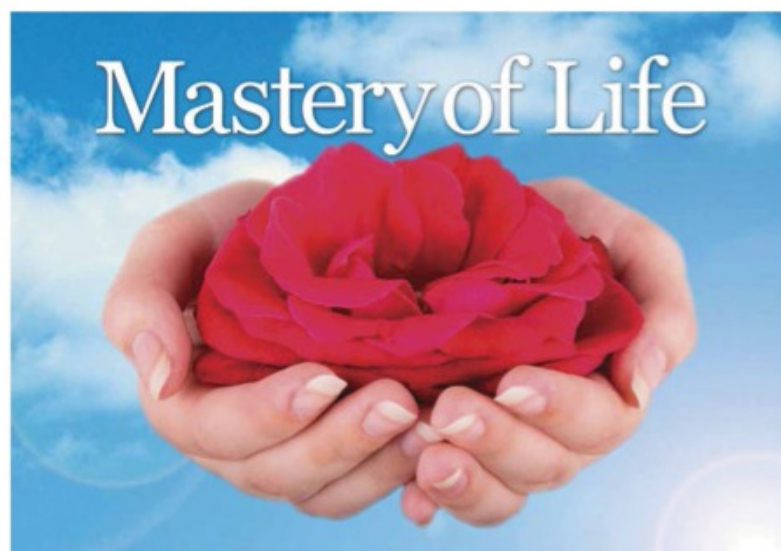
With no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, and with vegetarian options also available, they're a deliciously indulgent snack containing only the good stuff.

For stockists, visit sillyyaks.com.au/find-store



Study the spiritual

The Rosicrucian Order is an ancient mystical, philosophical and worldwide scientific organisation that seeks to promote mutual understanding and peace in all countries of the world. It does this through its unique home study system, which provides a foundation that ties together all of the different aspects of metaphysical study, as well as demonstrating their interconnectedness. Go to amorc.org.au



For inner good health

Vita-sol Wholefoods contain all-natural, prebiotic and sprouted plant-based ingredients to support the liver, gut, hair, skin, joints and nails. They come in Infinity, Flexibility and Purity formulations to suit your needs. Made from organic fruits and vegetables, the targeted, multi-active formulations are vegan and gluten-free. As nature intended, they contain no synthetic vitamins, minerals or fillers. For stockists, visit vita-sol.com



Are you thinking about your bones?

You should! Join 60,000 Australians who have completed the online self-assessment at knowyourbones.org.au. The online tool, which was developed by Osteoporosis Australia and the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, is an easy first step to understanding your bone health.



Naturally fresh body bars

From our farm to your skin! The Body Bars from Freshwater Farm are 100 per cent Australian-made and naturally derived, to leave your skin feeling cleansed and rejuvenated. Available at Woolworths, Chemist Warehouse and freshwaterfarm.com.au

Uniquely Australian

Li'Tya, meaning 'of the earth', is the first skincare company to collaborate with Aboriginal Elders and communities to tap into the unique qualities of Australian botanicals. This partnership has led to the creation of pure skin care and spa treatments that respectfully incorporate the 'Australian earth and spirit'. The blending of this unique dialogue, product development and community support initiatives, has gained Li'Tya worldwide acclaim as a premium spa and wellness brand. litya.com



Can't beat the original

Ryvita Original Rye Crispbread, which has a 5-Star Health Rating, is fantastic with just about any topping. With only two ingredients – rye and a pinch of salt – Ryvita Original keeps it simple to help you stay healthy. Look for it at supermarkets for RRP \$2.85; ryvita.com.au



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***Fast
fact***

74 per cent of pet lovers play music for their pets, according to an international survey by Spotify.

Help for anxious pets

Up to 70 per cent of dogs and 85 per cent of cats get freaked out at the vet's, and some cry each time you leave the house. Try these tricks to ease anxiety – instantly.

PLAY SOOTHING TUNES

Does your cat or dog have separation anxiety? “Pets like classical music, reggae and audiobooks,” vet Marty Becker says. And according to musicologist David Teie, dogs tend to dislike low-register music, such as heavy rock, which they find threatening. Spotify now offers Pet Playlists featuring soothing music, while Audible offers talking books for your pet presented in a steady, peaceful voice. Reading an audiobook aloud has proven very effective in helping dogs relax. Check out Audible for Dogs (go to audible.com.au/dogs for a free 30-day trial), where you can choose pooch-related titles, like *A Dog's Purpose*, or from favourite human reads, such as *Pride and Prejudice*. ►



OCCUPY HER WITH TREATS

Eating is soothing, relaxing and just plain rewarding for animals, Dr Becker says. If a dog or cat is going somewhere scary, like the vet's, let her go there hungry so she'll respond to tasty, calming treats. Even better: Put the goodies in a puzzle toy, which will keep a dog's brain occupied as she works to dig out the food – a double distraction from nerves.

KEEP THINGS QUIET

Before a bath, fill the tub while your pup is in another room, out of earshot, since the sound of running water can be frightening. Make sure the water is warm, and dilute shampoo in a separate container, Dr Becker suggests, so the sound of the bottle being squeezed won't worry a nervous dog (this makes the suds rinse off faster, too). Lastly, spread peanut butter on the tub wall so he can lick it off while you lather him up. You can bet he'll be psyched for his next bath.

GIVE HIM A WEARABLE HUG

Noise, whether from a thunderstorm, fireworks or a vacuum cleaner, can be a huge source of fear, and a gentle compression vest can help some cats and dogs stay chill. If you notice your pet reacting to loud noises, it's important to address his fear as soon as possible, Dr Becker says, as these reactions tend to get worse over time and eventually your pet may even startle at smaller noises.

WHEN IN DOUBT, TIRE HER OUT

Many pets become uneasy when they're bored, and physical activity can help reduce signs of anxiety. "A tired dog is a happy dog," Dr Becker says. **P**

Did you know?

Needing proof that owning a pet can benefit your life? How about living longer? Analysis of 70 years of global studies has shown dog ownership is associated with a 24 per cent reduced risk of death from any cause.

"Individuals who have dogs have a better cholesterol profile and lower blood pressure," says the study's lead author Dr Caroline Kramer.

"One study, my favourite, found that just the effect of petting a dog can reduce your blood pressure as much as medication," Dr Kramer adds.

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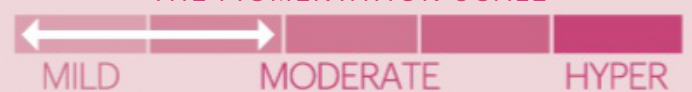
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less visible
marks

68%
fewer dark
marks

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from day 1 and clinical results
after 28 days of daily usage.*



THE PIGMENTATION SCALE



Dr Joanna McMillan, 47

She shares advice on healthy eating on TV, and also pens bestselling cookbooks like her latest, *The Feel-Good Family Food Plan*. Here, the popular nutrition scientist, wife and mum of two teenage boys shares her rules for life.

1 I'm happy when I'm laughing with my kids, have a tidy, clean house (I'm a little bit of a neat freak!) with a full fridge of all the foods I like, and people I love around my dining table.

2 I became interested in nutrition as a teenager. My mum and I tried every diet. Thankfully, I came out of that phase and realised that simply eating well with mostly whole foods is the way to go. That changed my relationship with food, and my body, to a far more positive one.

3 I work for myself and now I'm in my late 40s, I never feel guilty about spending time with my family or friends instead of working, or taking a walk in the middle of the afternoon. Often my best thinking comes when I'm walking or when I'm chatting with others in a social setting.

4 At university, my PhD supervisor, Dr Jennie Brand-Miller, said to me when I was getting married, 'Always be financially independent.' It was the best advice. My experience of ending up a single mum struggling to make ends meet was a real kick up the bum, trying to make my business work and be financially responsible for myself. My relationship today (with my second husband) is on a much more equal footing as a result.

5 *I will always put my friends and family before work or anything else going on in life.*

6 As a kid, I wasn't sporty, but in the '80s I discovered aerobics and rocked a pair of legwarmers and a thong leotard. It started the fitness habit for me and now I feel awful if I don't exercise.

7 I walk most days for at least an hour at pace, and I do an average three gym classes a week, incorporating strength and cardio training. If I'm wound up with stress or anger, or I'm upset, I unwind by walking.

8 I've been known to turn my phone off for the day and spend it on the sofa with a good book. In winter, I love to have a bubble bath and read.

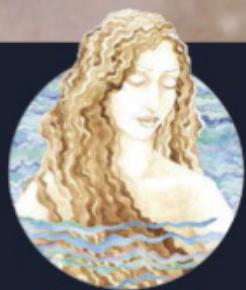
9 My biggest weakness is probably procrastination. I remember my mum calling one day and, when I told her I was cleaning my skirting boards, she asked, 'What work deadline are you supposed to be meeting?' She was so on the money!

10 It's good to put yourself out of your comfort zone – doing so makes it easier to face everyday challenges. For a few years, I tackled a big physical challenge every year: I climbed Kilimanjaro, trekked the Kokoda Trail and completed a Half Ironman. They needn't all be physical though. Challenges keep life interesting and ensure you keep growing. **P**



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