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# Editor's welcome

The inspired magazine for inspiring women



## Hello!

And welcome to this month's Platinum. We're taking a really good look at anxiety this month. A few years ago, it wasn't something any of us talked about. Was that because we didn't want to admit

to anxious feelings? Were we less stressed? Or did we call it something else?

Whatever the reason, anxiety is something that more of us seem to be talking about and admitting to these days, especially after the last year. Platinum psychologist Jo Hemmings has written an info-packed anxiety special — you can find it on p142. A little anxiety and stress can be motivating and give us some oomph but too much is simply overwhelming and debilitating. I met a friend of a friend recently who told me she gave up working way before she had planned to, simply because, as she put it, she felt “stressed, anxious and just burned out”.

I'm happy to report that for that woman, life has never been better. It was a huge decision and she freely admits she has to go without a few luxuries — but, as she put it, she feels “free and as light as air”.

That's a drastic solution, but what's your way of coping when life gets too much? Regular readers will know that I love getting outside and walking in nature but recently I've started getting into a bit of crafting.

I'm amazed. I've always thought that anything arts-and-crafts related was not for me. Honestly? I think it goes back to two stupid comments from thoughtless teachers when I was at school. (I know — time to get over it!)

For the younger, more sensitive me those two quite-close incidents were enough to turn me off crafts for years. But I've been inspired by so many of you who are making amazing things. My own sister-in-law, Rachel, is a whizz with a sewing machine and has turned her passion into a business, making the most amazing bunting, cushions, curtains and everything else in between.

So I randomly bought a lampshade-making kit and have started upcycling some old lamp bases that have seen better days.

Now, I'll never be selling my wares on Etsy like talented Rachel. But that's not really the point. I've realised that, for me, it's a great way of switching off and forgetting everyday worries for a while. I wish I'd known this sooner — but better late than never, right? Next I'm attempting a dried flower wreath.

Let me know your strategies for tackling anxiety — one of the things I love about Platinum is that we can all learn from each other.

*Ali*

**ALI KIRKER**  
PLATINUM EDITOR

## This month I'm...

### BLUSHING

Reader Barbara told me that Nars Liquid Blush (£26) is her “beauty elixir” and it convinced me to try it. Fresh, natural and so easy to build and blend. Barbara, I agree!



### CARRYING

This gorgeous bag from Dune (£75). I love a basket for summer and the addition of yellow handles on this one makes it so covetable.



### AL FRESCO

This blanket is perfect for picnics in the park, garden gatherings and making the most of sunny weather. £65, Oliver Bonas.

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on TV

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difference  
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Ms Sherliker Surrey



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use code 3797, while stocks last.



66 48 HOURS  
IN LISBON

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PERFECT

## Health

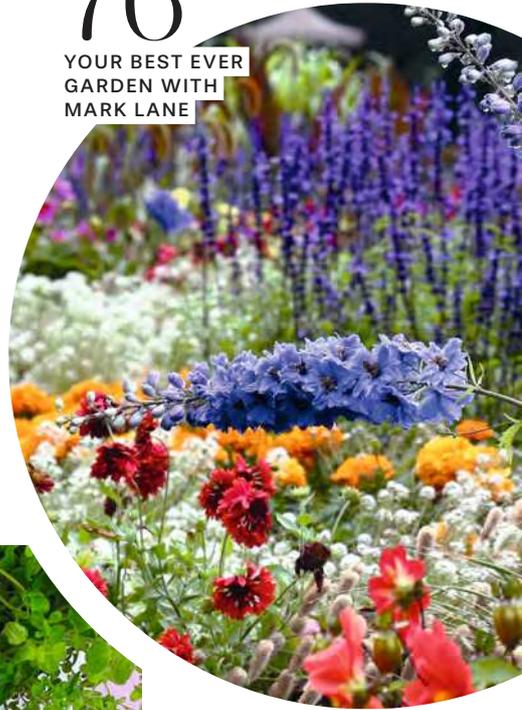
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Pack in more of this essential nutrient with our simple steps.
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**YOUR BEST EVER GARDEN WITH MARK LANE**



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**VALENTINA HARRIS**



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Jasmine Birtles on the world of Bitcoin.
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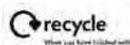
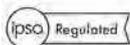
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**PLATINUM PICKS**



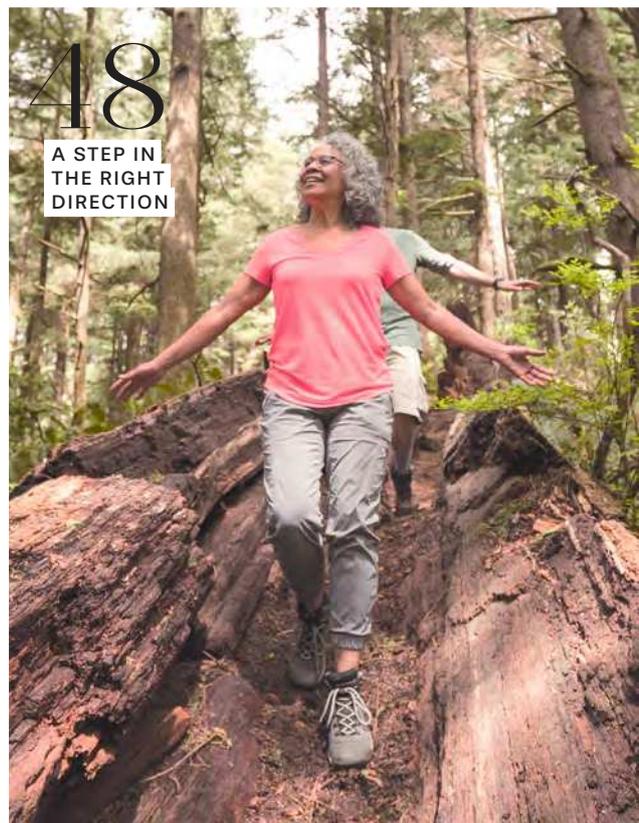
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**A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**



# OUR experts

FROM BEAUTY AND FASHION TO  
HEALTH AND FINANCE, YOU CAN  
EXPECT TOP CLASS ADVICE FROM  
OUR BRILLIANT EXPERTS. GET TO  
KNOW OUR TEAM...

P86-87



**BOO & DOTTIE**  
STYLE & BEAUTY

Our styling aficionado Boo and make-up guru Dottie help you build confidence through fashion and beauty. This month, they take inspiration from classic '70s style, helping you get summer off to a bold yet natural start.



**MARK LANE**  
GARDENING

Recognised mainly for his work presenting on BBC *Gardener's World*, Mark shows you how to create the perfect rock garden. And don't forget about your June to-do list — get set for a fruitful, diverse and vibrant summer.

P76-79

P122-124



**JASMINE BIRTLES**  
FINANCE

TV personality and finance expert Jasmine knows her stuff when it comes to money. In her June column, she demystifies the world of cryptocurrencies — how can you make the most of Bitcoin?



**GAIL ROLFE**  
FASHION

Celebrate ageless style with our fashion insider. As a style writer and business owner, Gail plays with high-street styles, showing you how to stay chic throughout the season — no matter the price tag.

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P54-55



**JANE MOORE**  
COLUMNIST

She's witty and feisty — and we love her for it. A journalist and *Loose Women* panellist, Jane takes on dodgy phone scammers and discusses the trials of socialising post-lockdown.

P160-161



**DR DAWN HARPER**  
HEALTH

Best known as presenter of Channel 4 hit series *Embarrassing Bodies*, NHS doctor Dawn is our trustworthy source for all things health and wellbeing. This month, she talks sleep, cycling and how to safely plan your next trip abroad.



**VALENTINA HARRIS**  
FOOD

As a cook and author, Valentina opens our eyes to the joys of food. Summer is the most fruitful time of the culinary year. Our expert shares some stunning little berry-themed dishes that are sure to be hits at your next picnic.

P30-35

P36-37



**JOANNA SIMON**  
WINE

There's no one better than Joanna for need-to-know drinks. A celebrated wine critic at *The Sunday Times* for two decades, Joanna shows you how to make the most of your sunny-weather wines.

.....GUEST EXPERTS.....

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**DR NESTOR**  
HEALTH

Dr Nestor is one of the UK's most experienced aesthetic doctors. An author and speaker, he tells us about tweakments — what's available and what you can expect at your first treatment.

P82-83



**STELLA RALFINI**  
SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

Hertfordshire-based neo tantric sex teacher Stella specialises in the sexual liberation of people over 50. Stella sheds some light on tantric sex, explaining why it may be the answer to a sex life gone stale.



**PHILIPPA PERRY**  
PEOPLE

A renowned psychotherapist and author, Philippa shares advice on coping with life's toughest times. We learn about the woman behind the colourful outfits, her family life and new projects.

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P138-141



**RAYMOND BLANC**  
FOOD AND DRINK

A well-loved chef and writer, Raymond tells us why last year transformed his life forever. Heart-warming anecdotes about the food of his childhood come alongside some recipes from his newest book.



Armchair, £955,  
**Loaf**



Candle in Nympholia, £46, **OVERROSE**

Add some colour



Scarf, £270,  
**Make It British**

# platinum PICKS

INJECT SUMMER JOY INTO YOUR EVERYDAY WITH THIS MONTH'S BUYS.



Summer blooms

Dress, £49.99, **Zara**



Skirt, £95,  
**Hope Clothing**



Bag, £70, **Dune London**



Doormat, £19.50, **Red Candy**



Leather sandals, £49.99, **Zara**

Flirty & FLORAL

Perfume in Thirsty, £80,  
**Fugazzi Fragrances**



Swimsuit, £65, **Boden**



Lip Chic in Peach Blossom, £33,  
**Chantecaille**



Footstool, £75, **Sweetpea & Willow**

Sun Drops, £40,  
**Dr Barbara Sturm**



*Perfect for picnics*



Quilt, £210,  
**Chandan Whittle**

Dress,  
£20, **Matalan**



**platinum  
PICKS**  
...



Table, £135,  
**Beaumonde**



Blouse, £65, **Boden**



Trousers, £59.50, **Oliver Bonas**

**Touch of  
SPARKLE**

Euphoria  
Face Palette,  
£56, **Nars**



Cushion,  
£46, **Amara**



Earrings,  
£70, **Lido**



Shirt, £25, **M&S**



Jug, £26, **Azul**

# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

“

**WE GIVE OURSELVES  
SUCH A HARD TIME...**

**WE NEED TO  
START BEING  
KINDER TO  
OURSELVES**

”

SIMPLY FABULOUS AND INSPIRATIONAL, **DAVINA MCCALL** IS ON A MISSION TO MAKE SURE EVERY WOMAN FEELS AS GREAT AS SHE DOES. ELLIE STOTT EXPLORES JUST WHAT MAKES HER TICK.

**C**ould any woman make a better best friend than Davina McCall? Putting aside the slight downside that it would be hard to ever look more fantastic than she does, this is a woman who would be your cheerleader until your dying day.

Almost 54, she has been there, seen it, done it and beaten it; she champions everyone to be their best self and cries genuine happy tears when they achieve it. It's one of the reasons why she has enjoyed TV success — Davina's totally rooting for people she interviews, with her emotions as close to the surface as those watching.

Few people could be a better advert for facing your demons and making the most of every day than Davina. Brought up by her grandparents from the age of three and seeing her mother only in school holidays (her freewheeling relationship with her mum meant they later abused drugs and alcohol together), she's battled anorexia and addictions to heroin, ecstasy and cocaine. "I was a drug addict, a complete mess," she says of her early 20s. "You name it, I took it... I had a job

so I looked like I was holding everything together. But then the cracks started to show. I began letting people down and turning up late for work."

Davina was starting to make a name for herself on MTV at the time. Her chaotic lifestyle (at one point she was admitted to hospital after an accidental overdose) could have ended her career right there, but at 25 she turned it around with the help of Narcotics Anonymous and close family and friends.

"At one time I was the sort of person you'd have crossed the street to avoid," she says. "I was constantly trying to escape myself — I was like a piece of fruit rotting from the inside. I was so full of self-loathing." She admits she reached the point of "get clean or die. And because I got clean I got the job I'd dreamed of (hosting *Streetmate* on Channel 4) and that changed my life forever."

Success arrived in spades. Many of the best-loved TV shows of the last two decades have had Davina at the helm, including Saturday night staples like *The* »





Davina's body confidence is higher now than ever, believing looking after how she feels, as well as looks, is what counts.

“I exercise and watch what I eat, but it’s partially genetic.”

*Masked Singer*, *Million Pound Drop*, *The Vault* and *The Jump*, and series like *Big Brother*, *The Biggest Loser*, *This Time Next Year* and *Long Lost Family*. She was due to host the new, revamped version of *Changing Rooms* until filming was postponed thanks to Covid and clashed with other commitments. Shame — Davina’s probably the very person you’d want holding your hand when you discover your home’s now decorated in fuchsia-pink MDF.

It hasn’t all been BAFTAs and bouquets, however. Her chat show *Davina* in 2006 didn’t do as well as expected after poor reviews. She lost her beloved sister Caroline, and her mum, to cancer. Her first marriage, to retail manager Andrew Legget in

1997, lasted a matter of months — “I fell madly in love, but it was wrong, so I got out quick” is the most she’s been prepared to say on the subject. Her second, to *Pet Rescue* presenter Matthew Robertson in 2000, ended in 2017. She now lives with her three children and is linked with her former hairdresser (surely handy during lockdowns) Michael Douglas, with whom she presents a podcast *Making The Cut*.

But Davina goes — literally — from strength to strength, and is now as well known for her fitness and figure as her TV career. Drug- and alcohol-free for over 25 years and an advocate of healthy eating, she’s sold millions of fitness DVDs and sugar-free cookbooks, and now has a website **ownyourgoalsdavina.com** with nutritional and workout regimes and advice.

Despite her message of ‘strong not skinny’, she has sometimes been the subject of criticism for being ‘addicted to fitness’ and setting an impossible body standard — which she vigorously denies.

“I’m not restrictive in terms of diet. I’m just sensible for the few days following a day where I have been pigging out. Stress eating is huge — I did a lot during lockdown, and I think that’s half the battle. We give ourselves such a hard time, our internal voice is so aggressive and we need to start being kinder to ourselves.”

However, she does accept that her own incredible washboard-stomach physique simply might not be achievable for everyone.

“Obviously I exercise and watch what I eat, but it’s partially genetic. We all have different body types. My stomach hardly ever gets fat, but my bum and thighs turn to jelly if I don’t work out for like, three days. Even after I had a baby, quite quickly I lost my tummy.”

There’s no denying, though, that Davina loves to push herself. Anyone who saw her sobbing as she reached breaking point during her seven-day, 500-mile endurance challenge

“Growing old disgracefully is far more fun!”



Star of the small screen: Davina's infectious energy and charm is a big part of her success.



for *Sport Relief* in 2014 knows that this woman's no quitter. Dragged semi-conscious from a freezing open-water swim, she quickly went on to cycle 65 miles and ended the challenge with a full marathon. Her beaming smile through her online workouts suggests she usually loves every minute.

“I find now that I'm exercising and eating right for... my health and my longevity. I've got three lovely kids who I want to take care of for as long as I can, but also I want to feel good in my skin. Embracing fitness has boosted my body confidence way higher than it was when I was 18, when my body was at its peak — because it has nothing to do with what your body actually looks like, and everything to do with how you feel.”

She has a full medical MOT each year and in response to those who criticise her leanness has said, “My cholesterol is better, my blood pressure's amazing, my BMI is perfect. I'm a very healthy person. Everybody just needs to look after themselves and stop judging other people. I make healthy choices, but I still eat bread, I eat butter, I eat crumpets, I love honey. I'm human like everybody else!” »



Her fitness website displays a wide range of workouts, encouraging subscribers to tailor them to their own fitness level and goals.

“In my early thirties, I’d go to a gym, grab a magazine, read it on the StairMaster for five minutes and then do a few easy weights. I was just going through the motions. Find the thing that makes you tick. Find the workout that fits. Because otherwise you’re not going to go. You never regret a workout. You can do this and it does make a huge difference.”

Reaching her fifties with a punishing workload hasn’t slowed her down, despite facing the same midlife issues as every other woman.

Davina’s been candid about dealing with the menopause; she was perimenopausal from around age 44 and consulted a doctor when her memory lapses became so noticeable she was afraid she might be suffering from Alzheimer’s, like her father. “It’s a huge turning point for women. I chose to go down the HRT route. It’s been a game-changer and helped me feel back to my old self again. I realise it’s not for everyone — everyone has to do their due diligence and research — but I felt it was the best option for me.”

Davina set Twitter on fire earlier this year when another woman commented she was too old and ‘wrinkly crinkly’ to carry off the strappy dress she wore on an episode of *The Masked Singer*. Davina shot back, “Absolutely no chance of demure over here... growing old disgracefully is far more fun.”

As she explains, “When I was a kid, women in their 50s looked like they were in their 70s and like it was all over. It’s so different now. I’d like to be a spokesperson for women in their 50s or approaching that milestone and tell them, ‘It’s going to be OK — I’m having a blast and you can too!’

“I notice now when I get together with my mates, we’re all more outrageous, funnier and more carefree than we were in our 40s. We’re perfectly able to feel sexy and vixen-like, with or without a man.

“This is going to be my decade where I grab life by the horns and ride with it!” Davina, we like your style.

**Davina McCall: Sex, Myths and The Menopause** will air on C4 in May.

# Through the years



In 1994, Davina joined the MTV Europe team. Her first job was on the show *MTV's Most Wanted*, before going on to work on shows like *Hitlist UK*, the ITV game show *God's Gift* and Channel 4's *Streetmate*.

From 2000 until 2011, Davina was the face of the hit TV reality show, *Big Brother*, something she loved so much that she once said, "They'd have to kill me before I stop doing it!"



Davina's gruelling 2014 *Sports Relief* challenge saw her put herself through a 500-mile triathlon that raised over £2 million for charity.

Since 2020, Davina has been a judge on ITV's *The Masked Singer*, and from 2021, *The Masked Dancer*, showcasing her presenting prowess and fabulous style along the way.



## WHAT DAVINA SAYS

"I have made so many mistakes in my life. But every morning we get a chance to be different. A chance to change. A chance to be better. Your past is your past. Leave it there. Get on with the future part."

.....

"YOU LEARN MOST FROM PAIN AND IF YOU DON'T PUT YOURSELF THROUGH IT, YOU'LL NEVER GROW."

.....

"I've always worn smoking hot underwear, even when I was single. It's just for me."

.....

"THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF WORKING OUT ARE AMAZING. IT RELIEVES STRESS, CLEARS MY HEAD AND SORTS MY MIND OUT." ■

*Stylist: Boo Hill  
Photographer: Oliver  
Suckling at Cliqq Studios  
Hair & Makeup: Dottie  
Monaghan  
Model: Fiona C at  
Source Models*

# Pastel PERFECT

FROM SORBET SHADES TO WATERCOLOUR HUES, IT'S ALL ABOUT PASTELS TO INJECT A SENSE OF FUN THIS SUMMER.

Jacket, £169, **Baukjen**  
Jumper, £90, **Pure Collection**  
Trousers, £69.95, **Lily Ella Collection**  
Bag, £59.95, **Lily Ella Collection**  
Necklace, £35.01, **LolaRose at QVC**  
Shoes, £100, **Vionic**

Skirt, £46, **Next**

Shirt, £35.99, **Mango**

Necklace, £110, **Ana Luisa**

Dress, £295, **Rixo**

Invest in a dress

Hat, £15, **Next**

Bag, £159, **Radley**

Jeans, £35.99, **Mango**

### DREAM TEAM

Pink and blue have never paired so well — or looked so good. Pink can make a real statement, but backed up with blue, it creates a gorgeous combination you can't go wrong with. It's such a feelgood duo.

Brooch, £42, **Wolf and Moon**

Earrings, £40, **Freemans**

Dress, £45, **Next**

Watch, £69.99, **Getting Personal** »

Top, £34.99, **H&M**

Blouse, £79, **Hobbs**

Bag, £29.99, **Mango**

Adidas trainers, £74.99, **Office**

Sporty chic

Wear all SUMMER ...



Sweater, £32, top, £26,  
and trousers, £26  
and trainers, £35, all  
**Cotton Traders**



Jacket, £25, **Tu Clothing**



Bag, £60, **Dune London**



Necklace, £29.50, **Oliver Bonas**



Earrings, £7, **Accessorize**



Dress, £44, **Next**



Jumper, £19.99, **Zara**



Sandals, £35, **M&S**

Stylish and practical



Trousers, £59.99, **H&M**



Dungaree dress, £49.99, **Zara**

**SWITCH UP YOUR DENIM**  
We still love jeans, but midi skirts in denim are up front and centre. Perfect for park strolls and socially-distanced meet-ups, this will be your summer must-have.



Scarf, £29.50, **Oliver Bonas**



Olivia Burton watch, £125, **Very**



Ring, £4.99, **Homesense** »

platinum PICKS ...



Sweater, £32, top, £26, skirt, £36 and trainers, £35, all **Cotton Traders**



Dress, £189,  
**Phase Eight**  
Jumper,  
£26.99, **M&Co**  
Scarf, £19.95,  
**Lily Ella**  
**Collection**  
Shoes, £100,  
**Vionic**

GO BOLD



9ct Bracelet, £99.95, **Seol + Gold**

*Delicate styling*



Dress, £305, **Rixo**



Scarf, £11.99, **Zara**



Watch, £159, **Ted Baker**

Top, £35.99, **Mango**



Dress, £55, **Per Una at M&S**



Dress, £150, **Boden**

Belt, £99, **Hobbs**



Ring, £78, **Ana Luisa**

### BABY BLUE

Holidays may be UK-bound, but don't let your summer wardrobe wilt. Twirl your way into garden parties, thanks to long-yet-lightweight skirts. Base your outfit on a simple blue as it's so flattering and wearable.

Throw on and go

Earrings, £19.50, **Oliver Bonas**



Headband, £22, **Oliver Bonas**

Perfect PRINT

Bag, £50, **River Island**



Jumper, £150, **Hope Fashion**



Sunglasses, £25.99, **Zara**



Step into style

Heels, £75, **Dune London**





Top, £155,  
**Lindsey Brown**  
Shorts, £40,  
**Kaya Turello**  
Shoes, £100,  
**Vionic**



Kaftan, £39.50, **Oliver Bonas**

Layer to wear



Earrings, £6, **Next**

Necklace, £15, **M&S**

Finishing touches ...

Fresh mint



Blazer, £56, **Next**



Bag, £65, **Dune London**



Sunglasses, £35, **Dune**



Trousers, £35.99, **Mango**



Dress, £38, **Next**



Earrings, £29.50, **Oliver Bonas**

## CANDY COLOUR

You may not wear such sweet shades normally, but they feel joyful and fun as we start to get more freedom. Add a statement scarf or accessories for extra punch. Reinvent the kaftan by pairing with white jeans for a new lease of life, too.



Kaftan, £255, **Lindsey Brown**  
Trousers, £85, **Pure Collection**  
Earrings, £80, **Yaa Yaa London**  
Shoes, £130, **Vionic**



Top, £32, **Next**

Pretty details



Earrings, £8, **Next**



Sandals, £52, **Office**



Blouse, £35.99, **Mango** »



Jumper, £26.99, **M&Co**  
Scarf, £25, **Woolovers**  
Trousers, £110, **Pure  
Collection**  
Shoes, £60, **Vionic**



Earrings, £44.95, **Seol + Gold**



Jumper, £70, **Boden**

Necklace, £16, **Joe Browns**



Jumper, £55, **Oliver Bonas**

Mellow yellow



Trousers, £165, **Max Mara**



Dress, £59.99, **Mango**

IF YOU ONLY BUY ONE THING ...



Necklace, £20, **National Trust**



Boiler suit, £69, **Sonder Studio**



Jumper, £80, **Boden**

Wardrobe must-have

## SHADES OF SORBET

Style together mellow yellows and pale pinks to create quirky chic. Summer styling doesn't mean ditching the trainers — invest in a pastel shade to take you from beach to barbecue.



Dress, £59.99, **H&M**



Sky blue topaz earrings, £225, by **Emily Mortimer Jewellery**



Shorts, £35, **M&Co**



Bag, £30, **Next**



Visor, £26, **Oliver Bonas**



Trainers, £40, **Next**

# Luxury Hampers from Cartwright & Butler

QUITE SIMPLY A COLLECTION OF DELIGHTFUL GIFTS, THESE QUALITY PACKAGES PROMISE HOURS OF EXQUISITE SAVOURING. JUST ADD A BOTTLE OR SANDWICHES FOR A PICNIC TO REMEMBER.

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**CODE PLT10**

## CARTWRIGHT & BUTLER - THE CHOCOLATE HAMPER

The Chocolate Hamper is the ultimate gift for any chocoholic. Packed in a beautiful wooden crate, the hamper contains Belgian Chocolate Fudge, Triple Choc Chunk Biscuits, Chocolate Wafer Crispies, Chocolate Wafer Rounds, Tiramisu Almonds and Drinking Chocolate. It's the perfect gift for sharing and ideal for cosy nights in, or evenings in the garden.

**CODE: 4254 £55.50**



## CARTWRIGHT & BUTLER - AYSGARTH PICNIC HAMPER

Imagine a sunny day in your favourite picnic spot complete with a cheese platter, paired with Caramelised Onion Chutney and savoury biscuits, followed by something a little sweeter. This hamper offers a lovely treat for all tastes, from classic fudge to sweet biscuits. To wash it all down there's a quality tea and natural fruit pressés. You'll look the part too, with this gorgeous, double-lidded wicker basket; traditional and just the way picnic hampers should be.

**CODE: 4596 £87.00**



**Online:** [dcthomsonshop.co.uk/platinum](http://dcthomsonshop.co.uk/platinum)

**Freephone:** **0800 318846** quoting the appropriate code.

Lines open 8am-6pm Monday-Friday. Please have your credit/debit card details to hand. Allow up to 14 days for UK mainland delivery to England, Scotland and Wales. Visit [dcthomsonshop.co.uk](http://dcthomsonshop.co.uk) for full hamper contents. ■



P30-35

## Valentina Harris

Valentina shows you how to make the most of summer fruits and berries, from peach semifreddo to strawberry risotto.

# Food & DRINK

Celebrate the summer with vibrant seasonal produce, from juicy berries to a Scandinavian-inspired spread.



## Wine o'clock

P36-37

Joanna Simon shares the most delicious wines to sample alongside your summer BBQ, plus her essential wine hacks that you won't want to miss.

## Tipplés & nibbles

P38-39

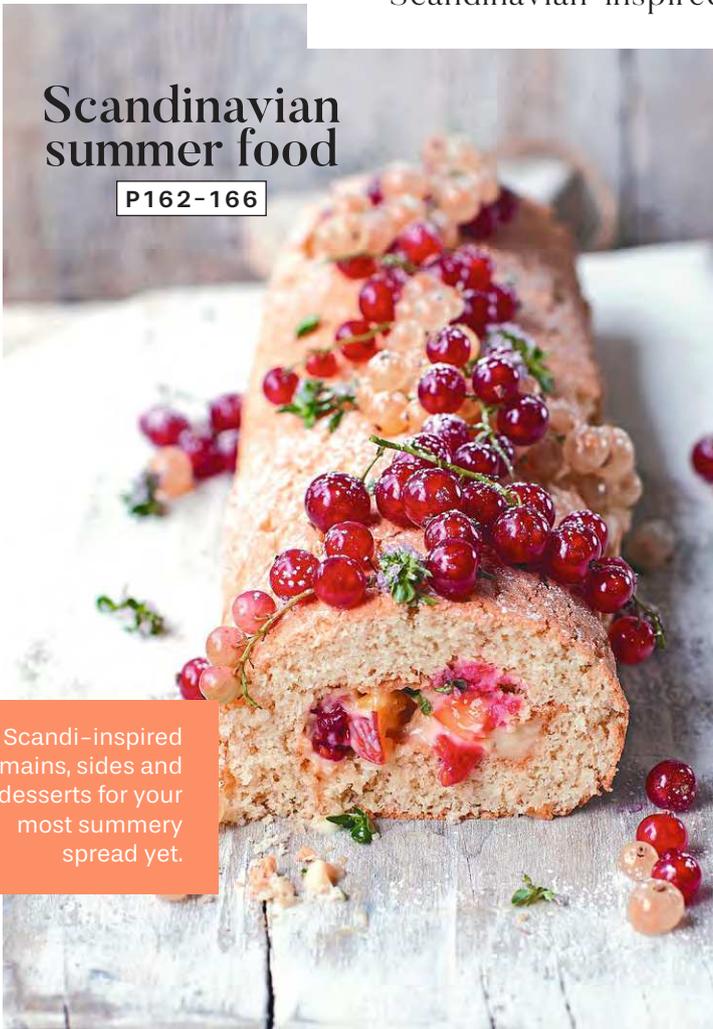


A tomato and basil tart recipe that's just perfect for slicing up and sharing around. Top it all off with some sparkling cider and griddled pineapple for the perfect afternoon. »

## Scandinavian summer food

P162-166

Scandi-inspired mains, sides and desserts for your most summery spread yet.



VALENTINA HARRIS

# Summer fruits and berries

THERE'S NOTHING MORE QUINTESSENTIALLY 'SUMMERTIME' THAN SOME LOVELY JUICY BERRIES. HERE, **VALENTINA** TALKS YOU THROUGH SOME DELICIOUS DISHES TO FILL YOUR PICNIC TABLE WITH THAT EVERYONE WILL ADORE.



**N**othing announces summer's arrival like the abundance of fresh fruit that comes into season across Britain and Europe at this time of year. Cherries, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and their hybrids, like Tayberries and

Loganberries, plus less popular though no less delicious and distinctive white, red and black currants. Quintessentially British gooseberries are widely grown and harvested in Britain whilst peaches, nectarines, apricots and melons arrive in abundance from further afield. I have noticed that figs have really flourished here during recent hot summers and I very much hope this season will yield a similar sexy bounty. This glorious riot of colour, perfume and flavour is what summer eating is all about.

Our cherry season in Britain flourishes in the traditional growing heartland of Kent where Henry VIII first ordered cherries to be introduced after tasting them in France. These glossy, irresistible fruits with their glorious blossoms are rich in antioxidants and contain high levels of vitamin C and melatonin. Around 20 different cherry varieties are cultivated

across the UK, each one offering their own distinctive qualities. In Roman times, cherries were part of soldiers' rations and the stones they discarded as they travelled eventually grew into the trees that proliferated throughout the empire. They say that to find the old Roman roads, once upon a time all one had to do was to follow the wild cherry trees covered in their blossom. I have a cherry tree in my garden but I never manage to beat the birds when it comes to harvesting. Despite my efforts, I only ever manage a tiny handful no matter how laden the tree may be, which is remarkable when you consider that an average tree will produce about 7,000 cherries.

Summer would just not be summer without a bowl of strawberries and cream. This quintessential British treat is synonymous with traditional summer events like Wimbledon, where a staggering 140,000 portions are consumed every year. Strawberries and cream were served at the very first Wimbledon tournament in 1877 as the development of the railway system meant that the fruit could be picked and transported to London on the same day to guarantee their freshness, and this tradition still continues today. Wimbledon strawberries are picked at 4am and delivered daily by 11am over the fortnight to meet the demand. But strawberries haven't always been such a desirable fruit. During Tudor times it was widely believed that raw strawberries were somehow dangerous to eat, so cooking them into a pottage with wine and spices was thought to mitigate their potential ill effects.

I love strawberries, but have always preferred raspberries, and the fact that in some forms of Christian art they represent kindness makes them even more special. Originally from Asia Minor and North America, it was the Romans who spread their popularity throughout Europe. Tayberries, named after the River Tay are a Scottish hybrid first created in 1979 by crossing a blackberry with a red raspberry. A similar hybrid, the Loganberry, dates back to 1881 and is named after the American botanist James Harvey Logan, but whether in error or by design remains something of a mystery.

Currants, red, white or black, and furry gooseberries seem to have somewhat fallen out of favour in recent times, perhaps because they require a little time and



effort to prepare, which is a pity as they are a true taste of British summer and their nutritional benefits are exceptional due to their high levels of antioxidants. They seem to have been replaced by the trendy blueberry, which to me has always seemed like a lesser version of the tiny wild myrtle berry with its much more intense flavour. In Italy, on hot summer days we would go up into the hills with a special kind of tool known as a ‘pettine da mirtillo’: a short handled rake created specifically for this purpose that we wielded to harvest this wild bounty of myrtle berries whilst walking slowly backwards down the hillside, taking care not to crush the ground hugging fruit as we stepped. Perhaps it was all the effort and concentration that went into the picking of these berries that made them taste so unforgettably special, but as a result I have always felt rather ambivalent about blueberries.

I really love the idea of the popular quaint Victorian custom of serving a perfect peach wrapped in a fine napkin as a dessert. It’s such a fitting way to present such a remarkably special fruit. At home in Italy when I was a child, the grown-ups would slice their carefully chosen peach into a glass of wine at the end of the meal as a DIY dessert. I used to love watching this summer ritual, and longed for the day when I’d be allowed to do the same. Its scientific name *Prunus Persica* suggests that these fuzzy fruits come from Persia, but like many stone fruits, peaches first originated in China, where they were the favourite fruit of the emperors. From China, they spread into Persia and were widely cultivated as the Persian Apple, and arrived in Europe with Alexander the Great until in the 17th Century when they were introduced into England and France. Nectarines are the smooth skinned fruit from the same Rosaceae family as the peach and are a genetic variant that probably originated in



China 4,000 years ago. The two fruits are almost identical, the only difference being in their skin.

Velvety skinned apricots, with their elusive, characteristic taste combination of sweet and tart also originated in China and Central Asia as early as 2,000 BC, and migrated along the Great Silk Road into Persia where it was known by the wonderful name of Zardaloo. A perfectly ripe, intensely flavoured apricot is a thing of great joy and not only tastes fabulous, but is also packed with nutrients like Vitamins A and C and provides a great source of potassium.

Melons are originally native to Africa, where many varieties of wild melons and watermelons still grow. Their origin remains a bit of a mystery but we think that prehistoric man may have gathered and re-sown the seeds of wild melons and that cultivation developed thereafter. Egyptian

tombs containing melon seeds and decorated with paintings of melons and watermelons would point to the farming of melons and watermelons in Egypt at least 4,000 years ago. The scent of a perfect summer melon is one of the best ways to check for ripeness — use your nose to guide you: if there is no perfume then the melon is not worth eating. Another way to check for ripeness is to gently press around the stalk: there should be a little bit of give under the skin. To check if a watermelon is ripe and ready, it should feel satisfyingly heavy to lift and there should be a creamy yellow patch on the underside where it has been sitting in the sun. Also, if you draw your fingernail across its green skin you should see some juice seeping up immediately in the scratched surface, and the melon should make a satisfying deep, hollow sound when tapped.

Whatever your favourite fruits, I hope you enjoy these bountiful fruits of the summer, either fresh or cooked into your most loved dishes, sweet or savoury. Even just the simple combination of fresh melon, figs or peaches with Parma ham is one of the most amazing flavour blends ever created; as perfect as raspberries and ice cream as embodied by that great classic: the Raspberry Ripple. Here are three of my favourite recipes to help you make the most of these treasures whilst they are at their peak.

 “Nothing announces summer’s arrival like fresh fruit.”



Photographer: @garlick\_food\_photography  
Props: @morecreation

SERVE WITH  
STRAWBERRY  
WINE FOR AN  
EXTRA HIT OF  
BERRIES

Juicy and fresh

A UNIQUE TAKE ON A  
TRADITIONAL SAVOURY  
RISOTTO, THIS RECIPE  
COMBINES BLACK PEPPER,  
STRAWBERRIES, RED WINE,  
RISOTTO AND VEGETABLE  
STOCK FOR A DELIGHTFULLY  
COLOURFUL MIDDAY DISH.

Dish up and get tuckered in!





## ◀ Strawberry risotto

SERVES 4

Gloriously pink and creamy, this savoury risotto depends a lot on plenty of freshly milled black pepper for success. The English Victorians enjoyed black pepper with their strawberries, so this is not a new idea, although the idea of adding fresh fruit to a risotto is a relatively modern concept. This risotto is very popular at Italian weddings.

**50g unsalted butter**

**1 small onion or 2 shallots, finely chopped**

**350g risotto rice**

**500g strawberries, hulled, plus extra to garnish**

**2 large glasses dry red wine**

**About 1 litre chicken or vegetable stock, kept at a low simmer throughout**

**6 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus extra for serving**

**Sea salt and freshly milled black pepper**

■ Melt half the butter in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan and fry the onion or shallots until soft and translucent, but not browned. Add the rice and stir to cover it with the butter and onion. Toast to get it crackling hot, but don't let it brown.

■ Slice half the strawberries thinly and stir them into the rice, then add one glass of wine. Cook until the strawberries are pulpy and the wine has been absorbed, then add the second glass of wine and stir. Once the rice has absorbed all the wine, begin to add the hot stock gradually in the same way, two ladlefuls at a time, letting it be absorbed before adding more liquid. Don't rush this process.

■ When the rice is about 3 minutes from being ready, stir in the remaining sliced strawberries, and let them become soft and pulpy.

■ Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining butter, the Parmesan, a little salt and plenty of freshly milled black pepper.

■ Cover the pan and leave the risotto to rest for 4 minutes, then stir again before transferring to a warmed platter.

■ Garnish with a few fresh strawberries and serve at once with extra grated Parmesan offered at the table.

Not only are strawberries absolutely delicious, but they have many health-giving properties, too. One serving contains 51.5 mg of vitamin C — about half of your daily requirement. Why not try adding some chopped strawberries to your morning cereal, on toast with peanut butter, scattered on porridge or through a salad? »



**DUST WITH  
ICING SUGAR  
FOR THE  
PERFECT  
FINISHING  
TOUCH**

## ▲ Soft cherry cake

SERVES 6-8

This lovely squashy soft cake is a classic baked ricotta cake, with ripe, dark cherries mixed through it. Don't be surprised if the cherries tend to sink to the bottom, this is fine, and absolutely in-keeping with the nature of this cake.

300g very fresh ricotta or cream cheese  
300g granulated or caster sugar  
4 eggs yolks, beaten with 4 tbsp milk  
75g plain white flour, sifted twice  
Grated zest of 1 large un-waxed lemon  
350g ripe cherries, de-stoned and halved  
2 level tsp baking powder  
4 egg whites, chilled  
1 walnut-sized knob of butter for greasing  
3 tbsp icing sugar

■ Preheat the oven to 170C/ gas 3. If you are using cream cheese instead of ricotta, whip it with a balloon whisk first to lighten and slacken.

■ Then continue to beat the ricotta or whipped cream cheese lightly with an electric whisk for about 10 to 15 minutes, gradually adding the sugar, until the mixture appears light and fluffy.

■ Continue to whisk, blending in the egg yolks and milk, then the flour, the lemon zest and the baking powder. Gently fold the halved cherries through this mixture.

■ Whisk the chilled egg whites into stiff peaks and carefully fold them into the cake mixture.

■ Line a 22cm spring-loaded cake tin with non-stick baking paper. Pour the mixture into the lined cake tin and level it out smoothly with the back of a spoon.

■ Bake in the oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until a long, thin metal skewer pushed deep into the centre of the cake comes out perfectly clean. Don't worry if the middle of the cake sinks a little, this is quite normal, as this is a very soft cake that is much more like a firm pudding.

■ Remove from the oven; cool for about 10 minutes, and then slide the cake out on to a wire rack to cool completely.

■ Sift the icing sugar all over the cake and serve with cream, whipped mascarpone or ice cream. You can also serve the cake slightly warm.





PEACHES  
HAVE BEEN  
SHOWN TO  
HELP IMPROVE  
HEART  
HEALTH

## ▲ Peach semifreddo

SERVES 6 TO 8

Semifreddo is a delicious Italian classic. The name means semi-cold, and the texture is not like gelato due to the addition of alcohol, which alters the freezing process. Because you can't make a semifreddo without adding alcohol, this makes it a grown up dessert. You can make this same semifreddo using berries, such as raspberries or strawberries, or use lots of different berries for a contrast of colours and flavours.

### For the semifreddo

250g halved, de-stoned, juicy, ripe fresh peaches

3 to 5 tbsp peach schnapps

350ml double cream

85g icing sugar, sifted

115g crushed meringues

### For the sauce

5 tbsp peach puree (made by whizzing up a peach or 2 in a

blender with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent oxidation)

2/3 tbsp caster sugar

### To serve

A few berries e.g. raspberries or strawberries/herb sprigs (e.g. chervil or mint) and sliced fresh peaches.

■ Puree the peaches roughly in a blender. Stir in the schnapps and then pour into a bowl.

■ Whip the cream with the icing sugar and carefully fold in the meringues.

■ Fold the cream and meringues into the peach puree.

■ Line a 20 cm spring form cake tin with non-stick baking parchment. Pour the mixture into the cake tin, cover with foil and freeze for about 4 hours.

■ Meanwhile make the sauce. Put the sugar and the peach puree into

a small saucepan and simmer until soft, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes. Push this mixture through a food mill or a sieve and then chill until required.

■ To assemble your dessert: Take the cake tin out of the freezer, remove the paper and slide the Semifreddo on a very cold plate. Slice into 6 or 8 wedges.

■ Pour a little sauce in a pool on to each of your dessert plates that you will have kept cold in the fridge or freezer.

■ Place the wedge of Semifreddo on to the pool of sauce, scatter with a few berries and add a sprig of a sweet herb or a few edible flowers and a few fresh peach slices. Sieve a little icing sugar round the edge of the plate and serve immediately. ■

# Wine o'clock

Summer is on its way and with it, a selection of delicious wines. Expert **Joanna Simon** shows you how to take your sunny-weather wine enjoyment to the next level.

Summer is well on its way, so it's time to banish the thermals and the cockle-warming red wines and bring on the crisp, bright whites, rosés and of course, the lighter reds.

Yes to ditching the thermals (fingers crossed for the weather). Yes, too, to putting aside big reds. But with a few provisos. Don't forget that from time to time there might be a juicy steak on the barbie crying out for a full-on red and there could be — I hate to dampen the mood — a spot of inclement weather and an occasional chilly evening when a bit of comfort in the form of a chunkier red wine might be required. There are also the people (and they're not all men!) who like rib-sticking reds whatever the weather and the food. There's nothing wrong with that.

But, overall, with sunny weather and accompanying sunny moods, wines, not just people, slim down and freshen up. And, here's a thing: you can drink white wine with steak if you fancy it. Not all white wines are equal faced with red meat, but I discovered many years ago that a medium-full bodied Chardonnay could partner a rare steak more than adequately.

At the time I was researching my book on matching wine and food, but this was a case of needs must, not of planning. I was off the beaten track in New Zealand and after a long day, arrived late in the evening to stay overnight in a self-catering chalet in a vineyard, before meeting the winemaker and his wines the next morning. I was tired and very hungry. The owners had left a steak and a bottle of their Chardonnay in the fridge. They didn't produce red wine. I cooked the steak and drank the Chardonnay with it. Perfect. This, of course, not only showed that the right white wine can partner red meat confidently, it showed the role played by occasion and mood in matching wine and food.

I still think Chardonnay that has had some oak



**Joanna Simon is one of the UK's leading experts and she gives wine the Platinum seal of approval only when it's met her high standards.**

maturation, but not too much, is one of the best white wine matches with steak, preferably cooked fairly rare, but I've also had hits with South African oak-matured Chenin and white-grape blends from the Cape, the southern Rhône and Roussillon. In a similar way, with lamb, rosé can be very successful, especially when the lamb is with herbs, anchovies, olives or Persian spices. Try a rosé from Provence, Lirac, Tavel, Spain or Tuscany.

When it comes to summery white wines, the zesty crispness and aromatics of Sauvignon Blanc, including in Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé, and Riesling are hard to beat. So is the steely freshness of young Chablis (a wine made entirely from Chardonnay, incidentally), but there are plenty of other summery candidates. Grape varieties that immediately spring to mind include Roussanne in France (see my picks), and

Vermentino, Gavi, Greco and Vernaccia, all from Italy. Vermentino is also found in Provence's white wines. They're limited in production but lovely — well worth seeking out.

I must put in an extra word for Riesling. It's a grape variety that can still carry baggage for anyone whose early wine-drinking days were dominated by Liebfraumilch (which, ironically, was almost never made using any Riesling), but contemporary dry and off-dry Rieslings from Germany, Alsace, Australia, Chile and almost any other country are wonderfully refreshing. They make ideal aperitifs but they're also some of the most food-friendly of wines, particularly with salads, vegetables, fish and seafood, and with spicy or herby dishes.

Other white grape varieties to look out for are Albariño from Spain and Alvarinho (the same grape in Portugal), Hungary's dry Furmint, Greece's mouthwateringly mineral Assyrtiko, Austria's signature variety Grüner Veltliner, and from the shores of Mediterranean France, the Picpoul grape. The latter, in the form of Picpoul de Pinet (see

my pick), is a wine that is as at home with seafood as are Muscadet, Chablis, Gavi, Albariño and Assyrtiko. In addition to Muscadet and Sancerre, almost any other dry white wine from the Loire Valley makes an invigorating summer wine. Serve these aromatic and zingy whites a bit colder than you would fuller-bodied whites such as Chardonnays.

When it comes to reds, there's a much wider choice of medium and lighter bodied styles than there was ten or even five years ago, often at 12.5–13% alcohol rather than 14.5% (although alcohol alone isn't responsible for body, so don't dismiss higher alcohol outright). Many of these go happily with fish, once a no-go area for red wine, and almost all are best served cool or lightly chilled. I know I bang on about it, but we still drink our red wines too warm in Britain, which at best makes them less refreshing and at worst soupy. Many pubs, bars and restaurants are guilty. Cool reds down in the fridge or use a chiller sleeve (the sort you keep in the freezer). In extremis, put them in a bucket of water with ice or in the freezer, but keep in mind the broken bottle and ice-slush wine mess you'll have if you forget about a bottle in the freezer.

Some red wines have always been served lightly chilled, among them Beaujolais (including the top wines that carry their own place names such as Brouilly and Fleurie), Bardolino and, from the Loire Valley, Saumur, Chinon and Sancerre. Red Sancerre is made from Pinot Noir, a grape variety all the better for being drunk cool and is versatile with food — from salmon, tuna and red mullet to mushroom and vegetable dishes, cured and cold meats, poultry, pork and red meat (plus game birds in winter). Most of the Loire's other red wines, including Chinon, Saumur and Bourgueil, are made from Cabernet Franc, a variety on the increase in other countries. It tastes fresher and softer than Cabernet Sauvignon so suits lighter foods.

Among other grape varieties that make breezier red styles are Cinsault (Chile and South Africa), País (Chile), Gamay (Beaujolais, Touraine and Ardèche), Zweigelt (Austria), Frappato and Marzemino (Italy) and, in south-west France, Fer Servadou (aka Mansois and Braucol). At the same time, wines from what used to be considered heavier varieties are now also being produced in livelier, finer-boned styles. I've recently enjoyed Syrah and Nero d'Avola (see my picks),

**Carmel & Joseph Le Penchant  
Roussanne 2019, France**  
£14.75, Tivoli Wines;  
£16.95, South Downs Cellars  
Floral, spiced with a stone-fruit  
perfume, supple and fresh  
★★★★☆



**Finest Western  
Australian Sauvignon  
Semillon 2019,**  
£8, Tesco  
Zesty, flinty, green  
apple, herb and  
elderflower aromas  
★★★★☆

**EMB Picpoul de Pinet,  
France £12,  
The Daily Drinker**  
Herb and peach flavours  
with grapefruit-peel zing  
★★★★☆



**Leyda Reserva  
Syrah 2019, Chile**  
£10, Co-op  
White pepper spice  
and raspberry fruit  
★★★★☆

**Bosman Nero  
2019, South Africa**  
£12, Sainsbury's  
Smoky plum and  
cherry fruit flavours  
★★★★☆



**Greenhough  
Stone's Throw  
Pinot Noir 2017,  
New Zealand,**  
£16.50, Tanners  
Wine Merchants  
Silky-smooth cherry,  
plum and spice flavours  
★★★★☆



## Jo's drink hacks

Over-chilling a white wine will numb its smell and taste, but chill a bit more than usual in hot weather — it'll soon warm up.

Full-bodied whites don't need to be served as cold as zesty whites such as Sauvignon.

A napkin draped over a bottle in a terracotta wine cooler will protect wine from damaging bright light outside ■

# Tipplés & nibbles

MAKE THE MOST OF SUMMER FLAVOURS SUCH AS JUICY, FLAVOUR-PACKED TOMATOES AND PINEAPPLE. SERVE IT ALL UP WITH A DRY GIN AND ZESTY TONIC AND YOU'RE ON TO A WINNER.

## ► Mixed tomato, Gouda and pesto tart

SERVES 6

375g sheet of ready-rolled puff pastry

3tbsp tomato purée

125g Gouda cheese, sliced

50g sundried tomatoes

2 large tomatoes, sliced

80g cherry tomatoes, quartered

1 egg, beaten

3tbsp pesto

Fresh basil leaves, to garnish

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

■ If you are using frozen puff pastry, defrost it overnight in the fridge or at room temperature 1–2 hours before you start cooking, but don't unroll it until you're ready to use it. Preheat the oven to 220°C/ 200°C fan/ Gas 7.

■ Unroll the puff pastry on to a large, flat oven tray lined with a non-stick baking sheet. Use a sharp knife to gently score a two finger-widths

border around the edge of the pastry. This will puff up into a beautiful, flaky crust.

■ Spread the tomato purée over the base of the pastry, keeping within the scored border. Top with the Gouda, followed by the mixed tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper.

■ Use a pastry brush or your fingers to paint the beaten egg all over the pastry border; this gives it a shiny, golden finish. Season with salt and pepper and bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the pastry is crisp and golden and the base is cooked.

■ Once baked and still warm, dot the pesto over the top and scatter with fresh basil leaves. Serve with a simple side salad such as rocket with a balsamic dressing.

BEST SERVED FRESH, BUT WILL KEEP FOR UP TO 2 DAYS.



## Freshly squeezed

*Say hello to summer with these zesty orange drinks.*



### Citrus Sour, £4.10, Campervan Brewery

This 5.2% ABV sour is a fresh and juicy beer. Super summery with its orange flavours, it also has a unique bitterness due to the Citra, Amarillo and Simcoe hops.



### Mediterranean Orange Gin, £18.49, Gordon's

Perfect for those long summer days, this orange gin pairs perfectly with a botanical tonic and lots of ice. Serve with slices of fresh, juicy orange.



## ▼ Griddled maple and brown sugar pineapple with vanilla ice cream

SERVES 4

A simple yet oh-so-delicious dessert. Simply pop the pineapples on a griddle or BBQ, top with ice cream and serve.

- 1 medium ripe pineapple
- 2tbsp maple syrup
- 1tbsp soft light brown sugar
- Pinch of ground ginger
- Zest and juice of 2 limes, plus lime wedges to serve
- 1tbsp butter
- Small handful of fresh basil and mint leaves, to decorate
- Vanilla ice cream, to serve

■ Prepare the pineapple by removing the top and tail with a sharp knife and then cutting away the tough skin on the sides so you're just left with the pineapple flesh.

■ Use a pineapple corer and then cut into circles, or cut the pineapple in

half lengthways and then into wedges, removing the core from each wedge.

■ Make the marinade by mixing the maple syrup, brown sugar, ground ginger, lime zest and juice together in a bowl. Add the pineapple flesh and leave to marinate for at least 20 minutes and up to 4 hours.

■ Place a griddle pan over a high heat. Lightly brush the pan with the butter to stop the pineapple sticking. Add the pineapple, reserving the marinade, and griddle for 2 minutes on each side until golden and charred.

■ Scatter over a few torn basil and mint leaves. Serve with vanilla ice cream, lime wedges and a drizzle of the reserved marinade.

**TIP:** Make it vegan by serving with coconut ice cream.



SAVE ANY LEFTOVERS TO HAVE FOR BREAKFAST THE NEXT DAY — IT'S DELICIOUS ON TOP OF YOGURT OR GRANOLA, OR THROWN INTO FRUIT SALADS.



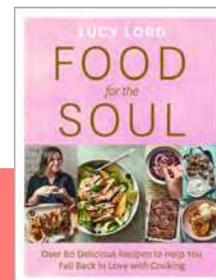
### Orange vodka, £18.99, The Bolton Gin Company

Tasting as good as it looks, this 31.5% ABV vodka has gorgeous bursts of orange flavours. Serve neat on the rocks or over a dry, premium tonic water.



### Valencian Orange Tonic, £15.49 for 24, Fentimans

For a no-alcohol option, you can't go wrong with this. The vibrant Valencian orange flavour will help transport you to sunny days on the beach.



**Food for the Soul** by Lucy Lord, £14.99, HarperCollins. Photography by Faith Mason. ■

# Fashion INSIDER

with Gail Rolfe



OUR STYLE EXPERT EXPLAINS HOW TO LOOK CHIC ON ANY BUDGET — WITH SURPRISING HIGH-STREET SAVIOURS.

## Under £200

In this first outfit, the natural hero is the sky blue, windowpane checked flowing coat. It's feminine but dramatic, can be worn with never-out-of-fashion white or blue jeans, wide-legged trousers, cropped trousers, a midi dress, or a pretty blouse and skirt. In colder days it would look striking over a tone-on-tone navy or black outfit.

To me the puff-sleeved blouse comes a close second in the style stakes, as I could see this worn all year round, with either a knitted vest or chunky cardigan over the top. Everything else falls into the category of wardrobe basics — except the blue handbag, which is a justifiable treat.

**C**ertainly, for any fashion expert it is always good to remember that what one person finds affordable, is another person's expensive.

I try to ensure that there is a balance on these pages, but sometimes I fail as my yearning to create the dream outfit overrules my fiscal restraint.

So, for this month I chose to set myself a challenge to create three entire outfits — the first with a total of £100, the second for £150, and the final one with a budget of £200. My only caveat was that none of the items should be from low-budget fast fashion chains.

I determined that each outfit should have a “hero” product that was likely to be the most expensive item, and everything else would revolve around it. Rather wonderfully, it was not as difficult as I had presumed. There were some hilarious moments juggling the numbers on my calculator against my inherent desire for style perfection. But I am thrilled with the three outfits that I have created. They are here as tempting possibilities, a guideline or template to what can be achieved with a relatively limited budget.

Nothing featured here falls under the banner of fashion fads that are here today, gone tomorrow. They should all stand the test of time and last for many years. Vogue in the 1970s used to have a wonderful slogan, *More Dash Than Cash*, and I hope this is what has been achieved here.

GREAT SHAPE



Coat, £79.99, **Zara**



Blouse, £49.99, **Mango**



Earrings, £12.50, **M&S**



Jeans, £19.50, **M&S**



Handbag, £19.99, **Mango**



Shoes, £7.99, **New Look**

Dress, £49.99, **Mango**



Necklace, £23, & **Other Stories**



Belt, £17.99, **Mango**

Bag, £25.99, **Zara**



Sandals, £27.99, **Zara**



## Under £150

Nothing beats the utter simplicity of a shirt dress. But this is not a classic riff on the elongated version of a man's shirt. This has femininity at its heart with billowing sleeves, a subtle curved hem, and minus the predictable stiff collar. Here I have styled it as a dress for balmy summer days, with gold sandals, a woven bag, a toning pendant necklace and matching belt. On cooler days you could add a long-sleeved T-shirt underneath, and add layers on top from a boho gilet, cardigan or a long coat, completing the outfit with boots.

## Under £100

A silky patterned blouse is always a good starting point for any outfit. With just two colours in the print you may be slightly limited with the pairings, but that can make your choice of what to wear it with so much easier.

Here the blouse is teamed with white wide-legged trousers, but it would look stunning with a toning camel shade or a pair of classic black trousers. It would of course work just as well with a skirt. It may seem mad that the bag is one of the most expensive items in this outfit, but I will happily admit that I loved the casual chic element that added the perfect finishing touch. You could swap the bag for a cheaper version and have enough cash left over for a necklace, pair of earrings or a bracelet.

Blouse, £19.99, **Zara**



Shoes, £9.99, **New Look**



Trousers, £39.50, **M&S**

Bag, £30, **Weekday**



## Style tips

A summer essential, rattan is so versatile. It works as well in the city as on holiday.

Bag, £29.99, **Mango**



The perfect butterscotch blazer, which comes with matching trousers.

Blazer, £34.99, **H&M**



The ever popular cardigan that is the ideal top layer all year round.

Cardigan, £20, **Tu Clothing**





Model Image

## TESTIMONIAL

### *I finally found something natural to beat acid reflux!*

A review of Frutin™ Gastro Gel said;

“I have been suffering from acid reflux for the past three years and tried several over-the-counter antacids, which would work, but only gave me a short-term relief.

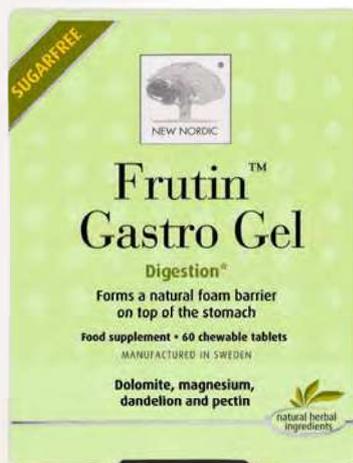
So, I decided it was time for me to try something healthier, more natural, and long-lasting. My niece, told me about a natural health product she had tried called Frutin™ Gastro Gel. She used it herself with great success and strongly recommended that I try it.

Now, I take when needed and I've been very happy with it. It gives me immediate relief and it lasts longer. This product is just great, and I highly recommend it to anyone who suffers with acid reflux.”

## DID YOU KNOW?



When you drop a Frutin tablet into pure acid, you see within minutes how the foam layer is created and floats to the top of the glass. This is exactly what happens in the stomach and why your stomach can digest food properly without any acid reflux.



## THE SIMPLE TRICK THAT BEATS HEARTBURN

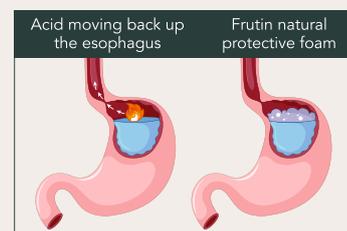
Take a bite of something that “doesn't agree with you” and your stomach reacts right away. You get a burning sensation, Yes! You get heartburn. You're not alone; Millions suffer daily with heartburn, but millions have also found relief with Frutin™.

Frutin™ Gastro Gel is a natural product that handles heartburn in a unique way. The secret is the patented citrus fibres which create a foam barrier when it reaches the acid in your stomach. This foam floats to the top of the stomach and blocks acid reflux, while allowing the stomach to stay acidic, so it can digest the food you ate.

### FRUTIN WILL REPLACE ANTACIDS AS YOU KNOW THEM

Current antacids work to lower the acid in the stomach, either by decreasing the secretion of acid or by neutralizing it with calcium. Both approaches give you a short-term relief, but neither do the body any good, as food stays undigested and bloating, burping and other digestive issues arise. These approaches can even stimulate the stomach to secrete

more stomach acid in the long run, which is the opposite of what you want. You avoid all of this with Frutin.



### FRUTIN™ GASTRO GEL IS UNIQUE

Containing a patented fruit fibre and natural dolomite chalk from Norway

- Creates the protective foam barrier when the tablet reaches the stomach
- Does not contain artificial sweeteners or sugars
- Uses natural peppermint for flavour



### HOME DELIVERY

Order Frutin™ Gastro Gel today and get it delivered straight to your door.

Go to [newnordic.co.uk](http://newnordic.co.uk) [hollandandbarrett.com](http://hollandandbarrett.com) or online health stores

OR CALL NOW  
0800 389 1255



[www.newnordic.co.uk](http://www.newnordic.co.uk)  
Online Store

Holland & Barrett

~ INDEPENDENT ~  
Health Food Stores

## A step in the right direction

P48-51



Your feet are your foundation, so it's important to keep them healthy. Hillary Boddie explores how fighting common ailments can influence your entire wellbeing.

## Living with lupus

P56-59



We take an in-depth look at lupus, learning about its complexities and how you can best live with it.

# Health & wellbeing

From understanding macronutrients to keeping your feet healthy, our expert advice helps you prepare for a summer of good health.

The list of essential vitamins and minerals can seem endless, but nutritionist Louise Pyne shows you why vitamin B12 can make all the difference when it comes to your overall health.



## Dr Dawn's health news

P54-55

This month, our health expert talks sleep, cycling and how to safely plan your next trip abroad. >>

## Boost your B12 easily

P44-47



# Boost your B12 easily

IT CAN SEEM CONFUSING KEEPING UP WITH WHICH VITAMINS AND MINERALS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE TO OUR HEALTH. NUTRITIONIST **LOUISE PYNE** BREAKS DOWN THE LATEST ESSENTIAL MICRONUTRIENT WHICH RESEARCH HAS SHOWN IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL FOR WELLBEING. STEP FORWARD VITAMIN B12...

**W**hen we wonder what constitutes a healthy diet, the three main macronutrients — protein, carbohydrates and fat — are often at the top of our list of essentials. These food groups are the building blocks of our daily diet, but we must not forget about micronutrients — the vitamins and minerals that are also scattered in the food that we pile onto our plate. When combined with macronutrients, these goodies transform what we eat into a well-rounded diet that enables our bodies to carry out a multitude of everyday functions.

Water-soluble vitamins are one of the most important components of a healthy diet. They are especially crucial because unlike fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E and K, excess levels of water-soluble vitamins are usually excreted in the urine and not readily stored by the body. So we all require a constant supply in order to keep our bodies functioning well.

B vitamins fall into the category of water-soluble vitamins. These are a group of eight nutrients, often referred to as the vitamin B complex. Each of these vitamins plays a unique role in our wellbeing and, as nutrients, they work in synergy with one another but also alone where they carry out their own specific functions. Out of all of the eight B vitamins, B12 (also known as cobalamin, as it contains the mineral cobalt) is arguably the most difficult to obtain as it's only available in animal products, therefore vegetarians and vegans may be at a higher risk of deficiency.

RED BLOOD  
CELLS CAN  
REPRODUCE  
QUICKLY —  
WITHIN 48-72  
HOURS

## WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Vitamin B12 plays a paramount role in maintaining wellbeing throughout our entire lifetime, from birth all the way through to old age. Infants require high levels, primarily to support brain health and red blood cell production and, as a mature adult, getting adequate vitamin B12 is equally necessary for those very same reasons. “Vitamin B12 is one of the B vitamins with numerous and wide-ranging functions throughout the body. It is known to contribute to the function of the immune system, energy-yielding metabolism, proper functioning of the nervous system and cell division. You can see from all this how important it is for overall health,” explains nutritionist Shona Wilkinson, of [drvegan.com](http://drvegan.com). While vitamin B12 is classified as a water-soluble vitamin, it works slightly differently to the other B vitamins in that the excess is not excreted, and instead stored in the liver. If you stopped taking vitamin B12 altogether, these stores would last two to four years without replenishment.



## IS VITAMIN B12 THE ANTIDOTE TO EXHAUSTION?

Vitamin B12 can be a factor affecting tiredness that can set in as we get older. “Vitamin B12 plays an important role in the production of energy,” says Shona. “As we age, our energy levels can drop and vitamin B12 levels can become even more important in the reduction of fatigue. You might find yourself drifting off on the sofa mid-afternoon, or you can’t seem to keep your eyes open past 9pm. It can feel frustrating and bewildering when energy levels suddenly dip — and, interestingly, low energy is a phenomenon that affects so many of us. Google trends figures show that ‘feeling tired all the time’ has been more researched than ever since the pandemic began.”

While the liver can store vitamin B12 for a prolonged time, it doesn’t stop deficiencies being more widespread in certain groups of individuals. Low levels are especially prevalent with age, along with certain autoimmune digestive disorders such as pernicious anaemia, coeliac disease and Crohn’s disease, where the rate of absorption is hampered because of the condition.

Vitamin B12 is usually combined with a substance called intrinsic factor in the small intestine part of

the digestive system and then absorbed into the bloodstream, but with autoimmune conditions, this process doesn’t run smoothly. The immune system attacks the cells in the stomach that produce intrinsic factor, meaning that the body is unable to absorb the nutrient. Inflammation and stomach operations such as a gastrectomy (surgical removal of part of the stomach) also increase the risk of deficiency.

Furthermore, certain types of medication can also affect the rate of absorption. A common side effect of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) which are used to treat indigestion, heartburn and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a low level of vitamin B12. Ironically while PPIs reduce stomach acid to relieve digestive symptoms, adequate levels of stomach acid are needed to absorb vitamin B12.

Diabetes sufferers are also at a higher risk of vitamin B12 deficiency. A 2009 study published in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine found 22% of diabetes Type 2 patients taking the diabetes medication metformin were at risk of deficiency. »

“Tiredness, loss of appetite, weight loss and general weakness are all early signs of deficiency.”

## WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Symptoms of B12 deficiency might go unnoticed in the beginning, and if levels are just slightly under par you may not notice any telltale symptoms. Some of the more common early symptoms include tiredness, loss of appetite, weight loss and general weakness, and it must be noted that if low levels are not treated they can lead to major complications over time. These include neurological problems, which affect your nervous system and include vision problems, poor memory, loss of co-ordination and damage to nerves in parts of the body such as the legs. “Due to the involvement in red blood cell formation, a deficiency in B12 can also result in anaemia, which will present with a host of symptoms such as feeling faint, breathlessness, lack of energy, pale skin and heart palpitations,” adds Shona. If you are suffering any of these symptoms you should consult your GP. “Your healthcare provider can test your levels or you can now buy test kits online to undertake at home,” continues Shona.

## YOUR DAILY NEEDS

Adults require around 1.5mcg of vitamin B12 daily, but NHS guidelines state that you can safely take up to 2mg of vitamin B12 in supplement form. If you don't suffer from a medical condition or take medication that may cause low levels, but do take care to eat a balanced diet that includes meat, fish and dairy products, you should be able to obtain adequate amounts of the vitamin through your diet alone.

As was mentioned earlier, B vitamins work in synergy with one another, and vitamin B12 works as a pair with vitamin B9 (called folate) to form new red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body. So if you are increasing your levels of dietary vitamin B12, it is also worth upping your intake of folate foods such as dark green leafy vegetables such as cabbage, kale and broccoli.

Unfortunately, vitamin B12 is not readily available in fruit, vegetables or grains, so topping up levels through supplementation is recommended for vegans and for vegetarians who do not eat many eggs or dairy products.

If you're browsing your healthcare store or looking online for supplements, you'll generally notice that there are two types of Vitamin B12 supplements on offer — these are listed as cyanocobalamin and methylcobalamin. Cyanocobalamin is a synthetic form of the nutrient (meaning it's been made artificially). It is an economical form that is considered stable and reliable. When cyanocobalamin enters the body, it's converted into an active form of vitamin B12 which is then absorbed in the bloodstream.

Methylcobalamin is a naturally occurring active form of vitamin B12 and this is thought to be the most readily absorbed type — some experts believe it to be a superior form, but there is inconclusive evidence to support these claims.

If your levels are very low or there is the risk of vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia, vitamin injections (in the form of hydroxocobalamin, which stays in your body for a prolonged time) may be recommended by your GP.

## Eat these foods

ADD THESE FOODS TO YOUR SHOPPING LIST TO HELP TOP UP VITAMIN B12 LEVELS



### CLAMS

100g of clam meat provides you with a whopping 98.9mcg of Vitamin B12

**40 times the RDA!**



### SARDINES

100g of canned sardines (which is slightly less than a standard sized can) is packed with 8.9mcg of the nutrient.



### LIVER

100g of lamb's liver will provide you with an impressive 85.7mcg of vitamin B12

**34 times the RDA!**



### EGG YOLKS

A single medium egg contains 0.4mcg. Try scrambling a few with some leafy greens for a healthy breakfast or lunch.



### MARMITE

100g of Marmite contains 24mcg of vitamin B12, making the yeast extract spread a viable option to include in a vegan diet

“In just a couple of weeks, I started feeling so much better.”



**ANNE HARRISON, 65, STARTED TAKING VITAMIN B12 AFTER FEELING TIRED ALL THE TIME.**

“As I’ve got older, I’ve found it harder to get to keep my energy levels up, and I would often feel weak and tired especially in the afternoons. I also found I had brain fog and difficulty concentrating at times. I saw a nutritionist who said that I sounded as if I was anaemic, so she recommended increasing the amount of iron-rich foods such

as lean meats, nuts, beans, lentils and dark leafy vegetables. She also explained that being deficient in B12 can also be a cause of anaemia and recommended taking a B12 supplement. I started taking a supplement and made an effort to really up the iron in my diet. In just a couple of weeks, I started feeling so much better. I had lots more energy and was able to concentrate throughout the day. These simple changes have really made me aware of just how important good nutrition is to feel healthy and well.”



Images © istockphoto

## 3 best buys

TEST AND TOP UP VITAMIN B12 LEVELS WITH THESE ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS



### BETTERYOU BOOST VITAMIN B12 ORAL SPRAY

Taken orally, this unique formula is absorbed directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system. It also contains added chromium and green tea extract to balance blood sugar levels and increase energy.

**£11.95, [betteryou.com](http://betteryou.com)**



### MEDICHECKS VITAMIN B12 TEST

This at-home kit allows you to easily check your levels with a simple finger-prick test which is then sent off to a lab to be analysed and interpreted by a medical expert.

**£39, [hollandandberrett.com](http://hollandandberrett.com)**



### DR VEGAN VITAMIN B12

This vegan B12 supplement helps to top up low levels and is available on subscription or as a one-off purchase.

**£8.99, [drvegan.com](http://drvegan.com)** ■

# A step in the right direction

YOUR FEET ARE YOUR FOUNDATION SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP THEM HEALTHY. **HILARY BODDIE** EXPLORES HOW TO FIGHT THE COMMON CULPRITS BEHIND FOOT DISCOMFORT AND HOW YOUR FOOT HEALTH CAN INFLUENCE YOUR ENTIRE WELLBEING.

**T**he feet are one of the most overworked and under-appreciated parts of the human body. Not only do they support your whole frame but they also help keep it fully functioning — and yet we tend to neglect our feet until they start to hurt.

It's hardly surprising that by the time you reach your 50s, years of wear and tear can start to take their toll, leading to foot problems which can start to impact many other aspects of your wellbeing.

The good news is that it's never too late to put the spring back into your step. "When the feet are working correctly, your entire body is uplifted and your posture and energy improve," says Yamuna Zake, international bodywork practitioner and author of *The Foot Fix* (£14.99, Watkins).

Like every other part of the body, the feet need regular exercise. "The idea that we lock our feet up in shoes all day and then do nothing for them once we can take our shoes off is crazy," says Yamuna. "We stretch and work out the rest of the body and yet the feet are left out of most people's fitness regimes — which makes no sense at all."

According to posture alignment therapist Ellie Burt, of posture-ellie.com, simply going for a walk or run is not going to work every part of the foot. "It takes a more zoomed-in approach to work on keeping the arch of the foot strong and the range of motion at each toe and through each part of the foot and ankle."

## WALK THIS WAY

"Ideally, the feet should work by transferring weight through each part rather than having weight simply dropping down into them," explains Yamuna. "When this happens, the muscles aren't activated, circulation



decreases, fluid retention builds and eventually our gait can no longer support healthy movement. However, when the bones and muscles are aligned and strong, when you press all 10 toes into the floor, the entire body is lifted, supported and becomes lighter."

## AGE CONCERNS

Women going through the menopause are often more susceptible to foot issues. "As we get older, circulation and blood flow can start to slow down, which can result in our feet becoming tighter and inflamed," explains Yamuna. "Hormonal changes due to the menopause can cause the bones to age more rapidly and if you've always worn pointed shoes and very high heels, the toes can begin to stiffen towards each other and lose movement."

However, these sort of problems don't have to be inevitable. "When you are mindful and educated about your feet, you can begin to use each part, transferring weight from the heels through the ball of the foot into each of the toes to keep them strong and supportive."

## SAVE YOUR SKIN

Your feet go through the ageing process in the same way as your face. "The skin on the feet thins and the subcutaneous fat is lost, resulting in less cushioned soles which can make you feel as if you are walking on stones," explains globally renowned podiatrist Margaret Dabbs.

### IN THE KNOW

Our feet can develop 'middle-aged spread'. Over time, the arch can flatten, pushing the foot forwards, outwards and up by a size.



“When the feet work correctly, our body is uplifted and our posture and energy improve.”

“The sweat glands reduce in effectiveness and the soft tissue becomes lax, resulting in hard skin forming on the balls of the feet, beside the big toe and heels.”

## TREAT YOUR FEET

“We only get one pair of feet so it’s important to treat them right — this means regular exfoliation to get rid of hard skin build-ups,” adds Margaret. “Use a foot file once or twice a week and always on dry skin as this will give the most effective result. Water softens skin, masking dry, problem areas and increasing the risk of opening up cracks and tearing damaged tissue.”

Regular moisturising is key to keep feet supple. “Incorporate a foot moisturiser, such as Margaret Dabbs London’s Intensive Hydrating Foot Lotion, into your daily routine,” advises Margaret. “Massage a small amount all over the feet, paying particular attention to areas of hard and dry skin.”

## Common foot issues

*Foot pain comes in many guises. Here are some common causes and how to help ease them.*

### ■ PLANTAR FASCIITIS

This is when the thick strand of tissue in the sole of the foot that runs from the heel to the base of the toes becomes inflamed. Plantar fasciitis can come on gradually or strike suddenly. To ease inflammation, try rolling your weight from the outer heel along the outer foot to the ball of the foot, lifting the heel and pressing into the outer ball, then shifting back along the outside edge to the centre heel.

### ■ BUNION

A bony, painful lump that forms at the joint at the base of the big toe, causing the joint to stick out and the big toe to angle inwards. Regularly wearing tight, pointy shoes often causes bunions, although they can be inherited. Treatment options depend on the severity of the bunion but specific exercises can help ease discomfort, including curling and pointing your toes.

### ■ FALLEN ARCHES/FLAT FEET

Fallen arches are a less severe form of flat feet. In many cases they cause no problems. Sometimes both conditions mean the feet cannot support the body properly and can lead to pain in the feet, ankles, knees, hips or back. You can be born with flat feet or they may develop later due to an incorrect gait. Wearing wide, low-heeled shoes can help.

### ■ MORTON'S NEUROMA

This is a swelling of a nerve that leads to a toe, which becomes inflamed and painful.

The main cause of Morton's Neuroma is wearing pointed shoes and high heels which cause the long bones of the foot to narrow inward and irritate the nerve. Avoid shoes that cramp your toes together and try wearing orthotic insoles to help reduce the pressure.

### ■ HAMMER TOE

This deformity of the toe causes the middle joint to bend and stick upwards. Over time the joints can harden so it's important to pick it up early. It's treated with simple exercises such as stretching and pulling out the affected toe as straight as you can. »

Full details of helpful exercises can be found in *The Foot Fix* by Yamuna Zake.



**“I incorporate foot fitness into my regular routine now.”**

**SHARON DOW,  
57, LONDON**

“I’ve mostly had jobs that require standing for long

periods and inevitably, by the end of the day, your feet hurt. By my early 30s, I had a painful bunion on one foot and another developing on the other. I never wore high heels and I tried to stay fairly active — going to the gym, swimming and walking — but I was conscious of it most of the time.

“I finally went to my GP to see what could be done. He told me bunions were part of the ‘female experience’ and there wasn’t much I could do other than let it deteriorate until it got so bad that I needed surgery.

“My journey to healing really started when I saw an ad for Yamuna’s Foot Fitness. I used Yamuna’s foot exercises to build strength, awareness and flexibility, which allowed me to get rid of the orthotics I used to wear, reduce the pain caused by one bunion and keep the other bunion from developing further.

“Now in my 50s, I work as a Pilates teacher and incorporate Yamuna Foot Fitness into my regular routine — whether it’s before taking a class, standing in the kitchen, going on walks or even out cycling. It has given me strong feet that are the base for all my other fitness work.”

## Other problems to look out for

### Cracked heels

As you grow older the skin makes less oil and elastin. This leaves it drier and less supple, which can be particularly noticeable on pressure points of the foot like the heels, which can harden and crack. To avoid this sometimes painful condition, file off any dry skin and moisturise.

### Ingrown toenails

This is when the side of a nail (often on the big toe) grows into the surrounding skin, causing pain, inflammation and sometimes infection. To prevent it, don’t let your nails get too long. Cut them straight across rather than along the curve, and avoid tight-fitting shoes that can squash your toes. If you do get an ingrown nail, see a chiropodist for expert advice.

### Fungal infections

Conditions like athlete’s foot affect the soft area between and underneath the toes and can result in white, blistered skin which is itchy and painful. These infections thrive in warm, moist conditions, such as when the feet become sweaty through exercise. Keep feet clean and dry.

### Calluses

Calluses are areas of rough, thick skin, often yellow-looking, found on the balls of the feet or heels. They form as a result of too much pressure or friction on the bottom of the foot. Use a pumice stone or foot file to gently remove the build-up of hard skin and wear good-fitting shoes with support.

### Corns

Corns usually form on the top of the feet or toes over a bone or joint. These small lumps of hard skin are also caused by friction and pressure. Simply eliminating the source of friction or pressure makes corns disappear. If you have a condition that causes poor blood flow to your feet, such as diabetes, you’re at greater risk of complications.



**Each foot contains over 200,000 nerve endings which respond to stimuli such as pressure, temperature, vibrations or pain. They act like an internal radio, constantly transmitting information to our brains each step we take.**



According to the Chinese, cleansing the feet every night before bedtime is as important as washing the face.

## Take the walking test



**Yamuna Zake has developed a daily walking test to determine how you walk and to improve your walking pattern to help build strong, healthy feet.**

- ✔ Stand with feet parallel. Step one foot forward with the centre of the back of the heel on the floor.
- ✔ Shift weight to the outer edge of the heel. Bend your knee a little on this leg and press weight down into the outer heel. As you press, try to stretch the entire outer edge out from the heel, all the way through the ball of the foot.
- ✔ Keeping the weight on the outside, place entire outside edge, from front of the heel to the ball, down on the floor.
- ✔ With the outside edge still stretched out, try to stretch the little toe and rest it into the floor. Now do the same with the fourth, third, second and big toes. Your knee must stay over the centre of your ankle so the weight never drops inwards and the ankle stays straight. At first it might be hard to separate the toes in this way but eventually they'll all work separately.
- ✔ With five toes pressing into the floor, lift the heel of your other foot, roll through the entire ball of that foot into the toes and then lift and bring that foot forward. Place the heel down first, then the outside of the foot, then the toes, one by one, as you did with the first foot. Repeat for both feet, four times.

## BAREFOOT BENEFITS

“Going barefoot regularly, giving your feet a chance to breathe and walk naturally without the confines of shoes, certainly helps keep them strong and healthy,” says Ellie Burt. “As children, we get shoved into shoes at an early age which can immediately start to deform and stiffen our perfect baby feet and affect the active function of the pelvis and hips (and the whole body). These two things, combined over decades, create most of the pain and problems I see through my role as a posture alignment therapist.

“The body works as a unit and when it comes to humans, it all starts at the feet and how they interact with the ground. Without shoes, your feet can move better, allowing all the toes and muscles to work and build up strength. This in turn has an effect on how you hold your entire body. Now I spend all my time indoors barefoot and all of my time outdoors in Vivo Barefoot shoes, which are designed to be as close to barefoot as possible.”

However, Ellie believes that when you’ve spent a lifetime in shoes and cushioned trainers, it’s important to build up your time going barefoot gently and gradually.

“For many people who are too dysfunctional in their movement patterns, to lose this support too quickly would mean that their muscles aren’t strong enough to hold them up pain-free.”

Start with 15-20-minute sessions and stop if you feel any pain or discomfort. It’s vital that you allow your feet and ankles to adapt to the new environment. As your feet get used to walking without shoes, you can increase the distance and time. ■



There are  
**26**  
bones in each  
foot, as well as 33  
joints, 19 muscles,  
10 tendons and  
107 ligaments.



It’s best to do your shoe shopping in the afternoon as feet naturally expand during the day. So shopping for shoes first thing can lead to a tight, uncomfortable fit.

# 6 supplements to add to your daily routine

SUPPLEMENTS CAN BE THE KEY TO IMPROVING HEALTH AND ARE AN EASY WAY TO BOOST VITAMIN AND MINERAL INTAKE. CHECK OUT OUR SIX RECOMMENDATIONS.

1

## Vitamin K2

Most of the vitamin K in our diet is in the form of vitamin K1. This comes from plants such as cauliflower, broccoli and dark green leaves. You can find K2 in liver, egg yolk and meats. Dr Sarah Brewer, Healthspan Medical Director, says, "Research involving over 16,000 women for eight years found that every 10mcg increase in dietary vitamin K2 intake reduced the risk of coronary heart disease by 9%."

2

## Iodine

Iodine is essential for the production of two thyroid hormones. These hormones control the metabolic rate in your body, converting food and fat stores into energy. Food sources include seafood, milk and crops grown on soils exposed to sea-spray. Dr Brewer says, "Supplements providing iodine act as a mild thyroid stimulant and may encourage a more efficient metabolism if your iodine intake has been suboptimal."

3

## Sea buckthorn oil

Dr Brewer says, "Sea buckthorn is a medicinal plant whose leaves, orange fruit and seed oil have been used for centuries to relieve conditions that share the common problem of dryness, such as eczema, dry eyes, dry hair and female intimate dryness." It's rich in omega fatty acids, which improve skin and hair quality whilst reducing dryness through the body. It can even provide relief from eye redness and burning.

4

## Biotin

Suffering from hair loss? Biotin may be a help. The water soluble B vitamin is essential for healthy hair, skin, nails and sweat glands. Dr Brewer says, "Biotin supplements were shown to increase nail plate thickness by 25% in women with brittle nails. In another study in which 71 people were given 2.5mg biotin per day, 91% showed definite improvement in nail firmness and hardness after six months of treatment."

5

## Selenium

Selenium is a powerful antioxidant and essential mineral that supports the immune system, cognitive function and helps defend your body from chronic conditions. The richest dietary source is Brazil nuts and small amounts are also found in fish, poultry, meats and wholegrains. Dr Brewer says, "As it is difficult to obtain, the EU recommended intake of 55 mcg per day, a multivitamin that includes selenium is a good idea."

6

## Royal jelly

Royal jelly is one of the most popular supplements for women over 50. It contains powerful antioxidants, and has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects for immune support. Dr Brewer explains, "Royal jelly is one of the best sources of vitamin B5. Research shows that royal jelly supplements have oestrogen-like effects and contain proteins that stimulate the production of collagen in skin cells." ■

# The Natural Formula for Weight Loss and Immunity

## SIMPLY BECAUSE IT WORKS

Now more than ever it is vital we maintain a strong immune system to guard against disease and support a healthy lifestyle. Doing this and at the same time losing weight may be a lot easier than you think, with Germany's No.1 meal replacement in weight loss<sup>1</sup>.

Made with a calorie-controlled, plant-based, natural formula, Almased® contains a nourishing blend of soya, yogurt, enzyme-rich honey, all teeming with vitamins and minerals. Almased®'s ingredients combine synergistically to provide superior levels of nutrition, all while optimising your immune system<sup>2</sup>, enabling you to feel your best while losing weight.

With over 30 years of scientific research, Almased® remains at the forefront of healthy, effective weight loss and optimum wellbeing. Recent clinical studies have shown that when compared to a normal 2,000 calorie diet, people who used Almased® achieved greater daily calorie expenditure and lost more fat<sup>3</sup>, thus validating our position as the 'Most Trusted Weight Loss Brand' voted by consumers, 2020.

Incorporating Almased® into a balanced diet will not only help you become lockdown lean, but also strengthen your immunity long after your weight loss goal has been achieved. What's more, it's easy to prepare and perfect for any busy lifestyle. Achieve your very own weight loss and wellbeing goal with Almased®'s 14-Day or Long-Term Plan. Lose weight, keep it off and feel great!



**Alison** (left)

*"I had a shake in the morning and it kept me full until lunchtime."*

**Susie** (centre)

*"It provided me with a lifestyle change and a nutritional boost."*

**Lara** (right)

*"It's a great kick-start to weight loss."*

*There's a reason we were voted Reader's Digest "Most Trusted Weight Loss Brand, 2020"...<sup>†</sup>*

## Protect Your Immune System While Losing Weight

- **Greater calorie and fat burning** vs a normal 2,000 calorie diet<sup>3</sup>.
- **Reduces body fat** without loss of essential muscle<sup>4</sup>.
- **Clinically proven weight loss** vs a fat-restricted low calorie diet<sup>5</sup>.
- **Low glycaemic index and glycaemic load.** Improves glycaemic control in Type 2 diabetes<sup>6</sup>.
- **Supports healthy immune system<sup>2</sup>.** Packed full of antioxidants and nutrients such as vitamin C and zinc.
- **Backed by science.** 30 years of scientifically proven results.
- **Contributes to weight loss** when replacing 2 daily meals<sup>7</sup>.
- **Maintains weight after weight loss** by replacing one daily meal.
- **Natural.** Contains no gluten, artificial flavours, fillers, stimulants or preservatives.
- **Suitable for...** vegetarians, sports enthusiasts and those with diabetes.



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1. Euromonitor International (2020). 2. Vitamin C and Zinc contribute to the normal function of the immune system. 3. Oliveira, C et al (2020). American Journal of Clinical Nutrition; 00:1-12. 4. Deibert, P et al (2004). Intl. Journal of Obesity; 28(10):1349-52. 5. König, D et al (2008). Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism; 52(1):74-78. 6. Kempf, K et al (2017) Diabetes Care; Jul 40(7): 863-87. † Reader's Digest. Trusted Brands 2020. Germany. \*Substituting two daily meals of an energy restricted diet with meal replacements contributes to weight loss.





### PLATINUM EXPERT

Dr Dawn Harper

NHS doctor and TV personality Dr Dawn has a wealth of knowledge and is passionate about health, fitness and dogs! She shares her expert advice to help you live your best life on full power.



### Website of the Month

For the first time in over a year, many of us are starting to think about the possibility of a foreign holiday. NHS services have been stretched to their limits and I know many of you are anxious about how you access travel advice. It is important to plan well ahead to give yourself plenty of time for required vaccines, some of which need to be given weeks apart, and to ensure you start any necessary anti-malarial prophylaxis in time. Check out [masta-travel-health.com](https://www.masta-travel-health.com) for advice on the protection you need. The more detail you can give them regarding your itinerary, the more they can tailor their advice, and they can also advise on clinics near to you.



# Dr Dawn's HEALTH NEWS

OUR IN-THE-KNOW HEALTH EXPERT SHARES HER ADVICE AND INSIGHT FOR THE MONTH AHEAD, INCLUDING INVESTIGATING SERIOUS SLEEP CONCERNS, PLANNING YOUR FIRST POST-LOCKDOWN TRIP ABROAD AND GETTING BACK IN THE SADDLE FOR BIKE WEEK.



## The Yellow Card

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) runs a Yellow Card scheme aimed at collecting and monitoring safety concerns such as side effects of medicines. All new medicines need to go through strict clinical trials before coming to market, but there is always the possibility of side effects, which were perhaps less common and not noted during those trials. The Yellow Card scheme provides a safety net allowing people to report any potential side effects at [yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk).

If you start any medicine and develop possible side effects not mentioned in the patient information leaflet, it is really important to use this resource. As a GP, I may only have one or two people mentioning unusual side effects, but by using this national database, we can more quickly identify any adverse events. All new medicines and vaccines have an inverted black triangle displayed in the package leaflet. It is particularly important that any possible side effects related to these products are reported on the Yellow Card scheme.



## A Breakthrough in Advanced Breast Cancer Treatment

NICE, The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, has approved the use of a new drug combination for the second-line treatment of the most common form of advanced breast cancer. Sadly, in the UK, 85% of women with metastatic breast cancer (cancer that has spread to other parts of the body) will not survive for 5 years or more after diagnosis, but this decision represents a real breakthrough, meaning women with this incurable condition can now be offered a combination treatment that helps control their disease and improve quality of life.



## Bike Week May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>

Many of you will know that I am a keen cyclist and so won't be surprised I was happy to hear that Bike Week, the UK's largest biking event of the year, will be going ahead in 2021 albeit in a slightly different format. Current restrictions mean that it is impossible to put on one big event to bring everyone together. So, instead, the organisers are holding a series of online events and are encouraging you to take part in the 7 Days of Cycling Challenge. Along with thousands of others, you will be encouraged to get on your bike for as many days as you can during the week. To find out more, visit [cyclinguk.org/bikeweek](https://cyclinguk.org/bikeweek).



## GOALS campaign

I was recently asked to attend a meeting about the launch of a new campaign aimed at improving outcomes for patients with severe eczema. The campaign was launched following a survey that found only 3% of people with severe eczema felt optimistic about the future of their condition and more than one in four felt that important aspects of their condition were not addressed by their doctor. It occurred to me that, while this campaign is aimed at eczema patients, the messaging is relevant to all conditions, so I thought I would share the thinking behind the GOALS campaign. The acronym stands for

- ✔ Give a clear story
- ✔ Outline what you want to achieve
- ✔ Ask the questions you want and get the answers you need
- ✔ Leave the appointment with a clear idea of the plan
- ✔ Share your experience. It will help others with the condition and those without to understand what you are going through.

As we return to normal life and open up our surgeries, there is bound to be a huge demand for appointments for ongoing conditions. You may find you have to wait a while for an appointment. Using that time to use "GOALS" to prepare, could mean you get more from your appointment.



## What's new?

Sleep apnoea is a condition that causes an individual to appear to stop breathing during their sleep and then gasp for breath. The patient is often totally unaware. In fact, experts believe that as many as 80% of patients with sleep apnoea are not diagnosed as they are yet to realise they have a problem and seek help from their doctor. I remember speaking to a patient who spent a night in a sleep lab and felt frustrated that he had what he described as the best night's sleep he'd had in months. When his report came through, he had had 17 apnoeic episodes throughout the night. So, how do you know if you have sleep apnoea? If you are always waking feeling unrefreshed, if you are constantly fatigued and have difficulty concentrating during

the day or feel sleepy at work, it could be that sleep apnoea is affecting your quality of sleep. And if you have sleep apnoea, it's not just sleep that is affected.

Traditionally sleep apnoea is diagnosed after spending a night being monitored in a sleep laboratory, but UK based company Sunrise have found a new way of measuring sleep. They have been researching their product for over a decade and have developed a small bean shaped sensor that is placed on the chin while sleeping at home. The sensor monitors the movements of the jaw, which are linked to the movements of the muscles in the airways. The measurements from the sensor are downloaded onto an app and can be interpreted by sleep experts, who can then advise on treatment. For more information visit [uk.sunrise-sleep.com](https://uk.sunrise-sleep.com). ■

# Living with Lupus

COMPLICATED, INCURABLE AND CHRONIC, LUPUS IS AN AUTOIMMUNE CONDITION THAT PARTICULARLY TARGETS WOMEN, AND CAN AFFECT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE, RIGHT THROUGH MENOPAUSAL YEARS AND BEYOND. **CLAIRE CANTOR** EXPLORES THE COMPLEXITIES OF LUPUS AND HOW YOU CAN BEST LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT.

**A**ching, swollen joints? Feeling tired all the time? Is it hormonal, are you run down or could it be a sign of lupus? It is nine times more common in women than men. But what are the causes and symptoms to look out for and can it be treated?

Several new words have entered our lexicon in recent months — ‘unprecedented’, ‘new normal’, ‘pandemic’. Talk of immune responses and antibodies has become a park bench staple. Covid-19 has shone a light on autoimmune diseases, with doctors likening the body’s response to Covid-19 as similar to an autoimmune reaction. Meaning that the body’s immune system — which normally fights disease and infection — becomes hyperactive and attacks healthy tissue.

## The mystery of lupus

Lupus is a complex condition that is often misdiagnosed as it shares symptoms with many other conditions. The exact cause of lupus is unknown, however it is thought that environmental and genetic factors are involved. Most people with lupus have a mild form that can be very well managed with current therapies. There are several types of lupus. The most familiar is ‘systemic lupus erythematosus’ — SLE. ‘Systemic’ means it has an impact throughout the entire body.



## What is lupus?

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can cause pain and inflammation in any part of the body. Lupus may be experienced in cycles or flares. The majority of people living with lupus will not have their life expectancy affected by the disease.

Although more women than men are affected, it can affect people of all ages and both sexes. Women of African and Asian origin are also particularly vulnerable to the condition.

## Symptoms to look out for

“One of the challenges with lupus is that it can affect people in different ways and in different parts of the body,” says Consultant Rheumatologist Professor Chris Edwards.

Lupus can manifest as a diverse range of symptoms, so skill and detective work from doctors is often required to diagnose it. The most common symptom is extreme fatigue which doesn’t go away even with adequate rest, but lupus sufferers may also struggle with pain or swelling in the joints, swelling in the hands or feet, fevers and sensitivity to light. To complicate matters, many other symptoms can be a sign of lupus — such as unexplained skin rashes, weight loss or weight gain, hair loss, depression, recurring mouth ulcers and Raynaud’s disease.

## A difficult diagnosis

A series of tests are required to diagnose positive cases of lupus and, as it shares symptoms with other common diseases, such as diabetes and arthritis, diagnosis can be even more difficult.

“These days there are very good diagnostic tests for lupus,” explains Professor Edwards. “But this also means that more cases are being identified. In the first instance, non-specific blood tests would be carried out such as a full blood count, liver and kidney function and checking inflammation markers. Further immunology tests, which look for antibodies, may be necessary. In particular, the ANA (antinuclear antibody test). If the test finds antinuclear antibodies then you may have an autoimmune disease and more investigation is needed.”



### IN THE KNOW

Lupus is the Latin word for wolf. Severe facial rashes caused by a number of diseases, and rarely seen these days, were thought to resemble a wolf's bite.

## How does lupus affect the whole body?

“Lupus can affect the system of the body,” says Professor Edwards. “It can cause inflammation of the skin, joints and blood, and in extreme cases the kidneys and liver. If you have inflammation in your blood for many years you also seem to age a bit more quickly, so other diseases, such as heart conditions, come earlier.”

Up to 60% of lupus sufferers may develop ‘Lupus nephritis’: an inflammation of the kidneys which prevents them from functioning

efficiently, and if not properly treated can lead to kidney failure. One of the key symptoms may be a sudden swelling of the legs, ankles and feet, as the kidneys are unable to remove extra water from the patient’s blood.

Heart disease, which can lead to heart attacks, is present in 1 in 3 lupus sufferers. The reasons for this remain unclear but lupus inflammation, high blood pressure or high cholesterol from prolonged steroid use are the likely causes. People more at risk are those with a family history of heart disease, smokers, those who are overweight and post-menopausal women.

## Why women should pay attention

Lupus and the treatments for lupus can impact women’s health at each stage of their hormonal life cycle. In childhood and the teenage years, lupus can impede development of bone density — essential to guard against osteoporosis later in life.

“Knowing that lupus affects more women than men, and most cases appear during or towards the end of childbearing years, there is some evidence that the immune system behaves differently when oestrogen is around,” says Professor Edwards. “Which means that women with lupus may find their symptoms decline as they transition into their 50s and their oestrogen levels drop.”

Lupus can go undiagnosed in the 50+ age group as people assume they are feeling exhausted or have aching joints due to menopausal changes. Alternatively, lupus patients might think they are suffering a flare but it is menopausal symptoms they are experiencing.

And although HRT doesn’t seem to heighten the risk of a lupus flare, some women with SLE have a sticky blood disorder which means they shouldn’t take HRT as it can increase risk of clotting. »

## Treatment and monitoring

Treatments for lupus aim to suppress the overactive immune system and reduce inflammation.

“The treatment of lupus generally falls into four drug categories — steroids, anti-malarials, immunosuppressives and stronger biological therapies,” outlines Professor Edwards. “Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories can be used very short term but we try to avoid them. Mild dose steroids, such as prednisolone, are a lifesaver for many, but they do have nasty side effects like weight gain and osteoporosis if used long term. Many women use the anti-malarial hydroxychloroquine, as it is a mild drug with few side effects. Immuno-suppressive drugs and other stronger medications are indicated for severe cases.”

## What are the different types of lupus?

### SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE)

Systemic lupus accounts for around 70% of all cases of lupus. Systemic lupus can be mild or severe and when severe can cause serious complications to the major organs.

**CUTANEOUS LUPUS** A form of lupus limited to the skin affecting around 10% of sufferers. Rashes or sores may appear on sun-exposed areas such as the face, ears, neck, arms and legs.

**DRUG-INDUCED LUPUS** Although drug-induced lupus is quite rare, more than 100 different prescription medications can cause lupus-like disease. Certain medications used to treat high blood pressure and hypertension, irregular heart rhythms and TB are particular risk factors.



## In the kitchen

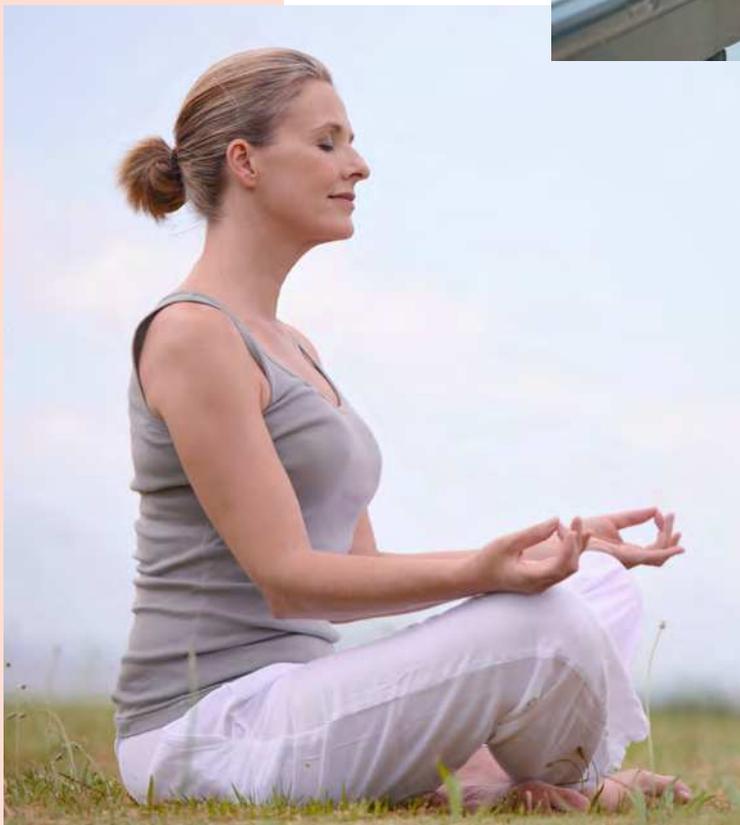
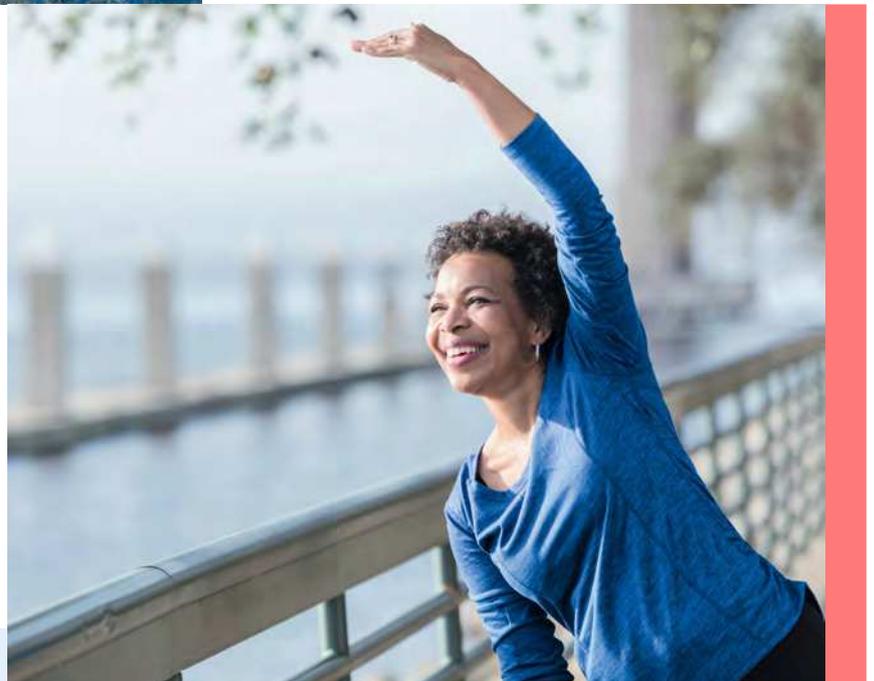
Aim for a balanced, healthy, Mediterranean style diet of fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and lean meats in moderation. Include omega rich foods such as oily fish, olive oil and eggs, nuts and seeds which may help reduce inflammation. Calcium and Vitamin D supplements may be recommended to support bone density.

Protecting the kidneys is important for lupus sufferers, and it is vital to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, especially in hot weather and when exercising.

Lupus sufferers should avoid alfalfa sprouts, which can cause inflammation. Many find taking echinacea can boost the immune system.

## Keep moving

It may seem counter-intuitive to exercise if you have a chronic illness. Especially when one of the key symptoms of lupus is extreme fatigue. However for some, aerobic exercise can be an effective, non-drug treatment to support their energy levels. It doesn't have to be high impact exercise, but simply incorporating movement and some strength building into daily life can improve mood and stress levels, benefit sleep and help control weight. Alternating the periods of exercise with adequate rest is important, as well as listening to your body and understanding its limits.



## Looking after your wellbeing

Lupus can take a huge toll on daily life. Coping with chronic pain and fatigue can hamper social activities and working life greatly. Figures from lupus.org indicate that 89% of people with lupus say they can no longer work full-time due to lupus complications. Stress can also trigger a lupus flare up, so keeping on top of stress levels is vital. Practising yoga, tai chi or meditation may help reduce stress and anxiety.

The Lupus Trust recommends adopting healthy habits such as stopping smoking, avoiding alcohol and maintaining a healthy weight.

**QUICKFIRE SYMPTOM CHECKER**

- ✔ Joint and muscle pain
- ✔ Swelling and inflammation
- ✔ Extreme tiredness that won't go away no matter how much you rest
- ✔ Rashes — often over the nose and cheeks
- ✔ Other symptoms may include: headaches, mouth sores, depression, high temperature, hair loss, sensitivity to light (causing rashes on uncovered skin)

The immune system is there to protect us but with lupus it sometimes ends up working against us.

Images © iStockphoto, Shutterstock

**COLETTE BARRE, 67**

“I was born in Philadelphia, and lived in Ireland for a few years from the age of 11. I was diagnosed with lupus as

a child after I developed a distinctive rash on my face. My parents never told me I had lupus as they didn't want me to feel different or to be categorised as the 'sick' one. But in fact I was different, although I always put it down to 'dodgy' health. I couldn't do the same things as other children, I didn't have the same energy and I couldn't eat like them. My friends never commented or expressed concern. But I felt like a misfit. I became insecure and introverted. My mother was into complementary medicine and put me on a regime of meditation, sleep, healthy diet and exercise. I learnt a way of helping myself through.

“My university years back in the States were a struggle as I was so exhausted all the time, and that stopped me from socialising. I worked extra hard, as this disease can take away your confidence, but I completed two degrees — one in horticulture and the other art history. I moved to the UK, where the climate suited me better, to work in an arboretum.

“My first marriage didn't last, due

to the strains that the disease put on our relationship. I married again, and at that time my health worsened. I began to think that I was perhaps inventing it all. That it was all psychosomatic. Lupus sufferers often doubt themselves, and doctors today still tell patients they are imagining things. My husband is incredibly supportive, although for many years he didn't know that I had lupus (as nor did I). I was finally officially diagnosed in 2010. Over the years I have learnt to take responsibility for my illness. To be on top of all the medical treatments and advances, to be my own advocate.

“Despite the illness — you feel 20 years older than your biological age — and struggles with depression, I have managed to travel and enjoy life.

“Since Covid-19, suddenly everyone knows what lupus is and there's so much interest in immunology and antibodies. The symptoms of Long Covid are very similar to lupus.

One of the key drugs to treat lupus is hydroxychloroquine which was trialled in Covid patients for a while.

“The things that have helped me to enjoy life and stay sane are the support forum at lupusuk, reading, music and the countryside — even during those times when I am only well enough to look through the window.” ■

**5**  
million people  
in the world  
have lupus.

It is estimated  
that approximately  
**1 in 1,000**  
people in the UK  
have lupus.

  
**9 out of 10**  
people with lupus  
are women.

Lupus is up to  
**four times more**  
prevalent in  
people of **African,**  
**Caribbean and**  
**Asian origin.**

# When trauma turns into PTSD

IT'S NOT JUST WAR VETERANS WHO SUFFER PTSD — ANYONE CAN BE AT RISK. **SISKI GREEN** FINDS OUT WHAT THE CONDITION IS AND THE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREVENT ANY TRAUMA YOU EXPERIENCE FROM DEVELOPING FURTHER.

“**T**hat doesn’t apply to me,” is what you probably think when you see the words post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It’s something we tend to associate with army veterans or firefighters, people who work in war zones or natural disasters. But it’s likely to be far more common than you realise, possibly affecting those close to you or even yourself, especially as a woman — perhaps surprisingly, women are more susceptible to it. And PTSD and its symptoms are something we need to talk about and try to resolve.

If you’re still thinking it wouldn’t affect you, consider that you may also be at greater risk if you’re in your 60s or older, as you won’t have grown up with the concept of PTSD, which was recognised in the 1980s. This means you’re more likely to suffer with PTSD symptoms because you, or those around you, may not have had the information necessary to recognise what was happening and treat it. Not addressing the effects of a traumatic event puts you at increased risk of PTSD.

The triggers of PTSD in the first place are many and varied. Trauma for one woman will be different to another’s. But with five out of 10 women experiencing a traumatic event, according to the National Centre for PTSD, it’s not surprising that one woman in 10 will develop PTSD at some point in her lifetime.

Women are about twice as likely as men to develop PTSD (assuming similar levels of traumatic events), according to the UK Government’s Office on Women’s Health. And unless you’re aware of the risks and know how to deal with a traumatic experience, addressing it with therapy or treatment and self-care, you could well be putting yourself on the path to developing PTSD symptoms.

“Covid-19 has put us all at increased risk of PTSD.”

## WHAT KIND OF TRAUMA TRIGGERS PTSD?

While for men the risk of any kind of traumatic event is actually higher — this includes war and combat experiences — there are certain types of trauma women are more likely to endure. Sexual assault, child abuse, childhood neglect and domestic violence are examples, all of which can lead to PTSD. Sexual assault survivors are far more likely to suffer with PTSD than women who have experienced other types of trauma. This is partly because of associated shame or reluctance to share details relating to the trauma, which can lead to lack of support and internalising of the distress rather than progress and healing. According to PTSD UK, around 94% of survivors will develop symptoms of PTSD in the first two weeks after the event, with around 50% suffering long-term symptoms.

Emotional abuse from a family member, friends or partners, can also cause PTSD. Emotional abuse that involves an imbalance in the power dynamic, where you are manipulated into thinking or doing things you wouldn’t usually do, is the basis for many traumatic situations. You might feel as though you are physically threatened, or made to feel vulnerable. Being regularly lied to or criticised to the point where you feel worthless (gaslighting), as well as an imbalance in emotional power dynamics where you feel out of control, can all lead to PTSD.

## HAS THE PANDEMIC MADE THINGS WORSE?

The experiences related to Covid-19 — isolating in our homes, not being able to see loved ones or friends, communicating via unusual means — has put us all at increased risk of PTSD, too. A support network and being able to communicate information and feelings about a traumatic event is key to overcoming it.



The majority of patients suffering major trauma identified in the UK are now older than 50.

But the pandemic has had a further impact — PTSD is not uncommon in patients who have been in intensive care and, what's more, staff who treat patients in ICU situations are also at risk. According to a survey overseen by medical journal *BJPsych Open*, 35% of patients who were put on a ventilator experienced symptoms of PTSD compared to 18% of those who were hospitalised without a ventilator. As Dr Adrian James, president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, stated in one report, "Over 400,000 patients have been hospitalised with Covid-19 in the UK and sadly there will be more to come. Many of those fortunate enough to survive their ordeal will experience a significant impact on their mental health."

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF PTSD?

Anyone who has gone through a traumatic event will experience effects, but PTSD is different in that it continues even after a person might seem to be better or 'over it'. In fact, PTSD is defined as being when a person experiences a trauma and the memory of that trauma isn't 'filed' correctly in the brain. That can then lead to symptoms including unexplained mood changes and outbursts of anger, overreacting to unexpected events, depression, negativity, insomnia, nightmares and flashbacks where you relive the trauma and your body has the same physical response it would or did during the event.

Psychologist and author of new book *The Leader's Guide To Resilience* (£14.99, Pearson) Dr Audrey Tang describes various symptoms that you may experience.

"Feelings of anxiety and increased heart rate when you're faced with reminders of the event. Being more watchful. You're more likely



Overcoming PTSD is possible with the right support and coping mechanisms in place.

to scan your environment for potential sources of threats — which may result in living in a constant state of low-level anxiety. Flashbacks, fear for family, and some people have a need to control the environment as much as they can — which can give rise to OCD behaviours or even hoarding."

However, these symptoms will not be diagnosed as PTSD unless an event or a series of events actually relating to these symptoms can be pinpointed. Dr Tang describes it. "PTSD is a disorder that develops in relation to an event which creates psychological trauma — it could be a response to serious injury, or sexual violation.

"The exposure must involve directly experiencing the event, witnessing the event in person, learning of an actual or threatened death of a close family member or friend, or repeated first-hand, extreme exposure to the details of the event."

Put simply, you may have some symptoms that match those of a PTSD patient, but not actually be suffering from PTSD itself.

"A formal diagnosis of PTSD is made when the symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social and/or occupational dysfunction for a period of at least one month," says Dr Tang. "The symptoms cannot be due to a medical condition, medication, or drugs or alcohol." »

## IS IT PTSD OR IS IT ANXIETY?

For most people, symptoms of PTSD develop within around a month of the event. Some, however, may experience PTSD years later. And to be clear, the trauma needn't be one isolated event. Long-term abuse, neglect or fear can also trigger PTSD — in this case it may develop over time and so be more difficult to pin down to a moment in your life.

Risk factors that make PTSD symptoms more common include feeling as though your life was in danger and also not having a supportive network of friends and family, and/or having a history of mental health issues such as depression. Anxiety, also extremely common, is less likely to be linked to a specific event or events that you can pinpoint — see our anxiety special on p142 for more information.

## PROTECT YOURSELF AS BEST YOU CAN

“A support network has long been hailed as an excellent buffer to stress, with research stretching back to the 1950s,” says Dr Tang. “But what that ‘social support’ looks like may be different to each individual.” While for some people, the enforced isolation imposed by recent events related to Covid may have meant less support, for others it could have meant the opposite.

“It is possible that some cope well with a phone call, so for them little has changed, and in fact, they might actually be chatting more regularly. My girlfriends and I now have a group call on our birthdays and special occasions rather than ‘saving it

for our annual tea,” says Dr Tang.

“The family can also be a great resource of support, and it is possible that some relationships may have had the opportunity to deepen — thus providing a very robust structure within the lockdown scenario.”

That said, reporting a traumatic event during socially restricted times is more difficult. Similarly, bringing up an event casually during conversation may also prove more tricky. And, of course, if the traumatic event takes place in the home — such as with domestic abuse — being restricted socially can be extremely dangerous.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I ALREADY HAVE PTSD?

If reading through the symptoms of PTSD you feel it's likely you are suffering as a result of a trauma, the most important thing you can do is seek qualified help.

Therapy can help and Dr Tang describes a ‘safe space of unconditional acceptance’ (with full awareness of ethical codes of practice — eg a duty to refer if one is concerned the person poses a risk to themselves or another). “This space can take time to create and it is important to remember, if you are seeking help, that you do not have to stick with your first therapist.”

What you would expect to receive via your professional help is exploration of the trauma and the effect it has had, along with a provision of tools, both mental and physical, to manage the heightened emotional states being experienced and help with day-to-day living. This can include re-framing your experience to see yourself as a survivor, not a victim.

Dr Tang also puts emphasis on ‘being well’. “For me the goal is not just removal or management of the suffering, but on being able to embrace life. Sadly, when people have been through huge mental and emotional setbacks, they may never have learned the tools of resilience, and so it's little things like adding ‘gratitude practice’ to their day — which can be as simple as saying, ‘I'm grateful I was strong enough to get out of bed today.’”

What's clear, however, is that if you really want to move on and past the trauma, professional help is a must. “Long-term it's essential to identify as a survivor rather than a victim and continue to seek support from professionals and trauma specialists whenever you feel you need it,” says Claire Snowden-Darling, founder of [balancedwellness.co.uk](http://balancedwellness.co.uk). “PTSD can colour any area of your life, and learning to identify when those feelings come up allows you to use the tools you've learned successfully.” And remember that even when you feel you are alone in your experiences, chances are there are many others — even those close to you — who have experienced, or are experiencing, the same. As with so many mental and physical health issues, the first step is to recognise that you need help.



PTSD is much more common than once thought — but help is available.

“I wouldn’t be here today if I hadn’t had the support.”



**EXECUTIVE AND MUM LYDIA NYAMBURA EXPERIENCED PTSD AFTER BEING DIAGNOSED WITH MENINGITIS.**

When Lydia was diagnosed with

meningitis, its effects meant she couldn’t see, hear or communicate properly. “My body was not mine any more,” she says. “I heard the doctor say that ‘meningitis kills in hours. She is lucky to be alive and in a good hospital’. After almost a month of very little improvement, my doctor said I could be released, simply because he thought I could not recover fully.

“When I left the hospital in a wheelchair, my life felt at the very edge. My husband would bathe me because I couldn’t do it. I could feel movements but I couldn’t see anything.”

Sensing she was at rock bottom, Lydia felt she was clinging on to life, but the faces of her children kept her going. “If I gave up it would mean leaving my daughters without their mother. The thought of that gave me the courage to fight for my life. It fuelled my will and drive to live.

“I had psychosocial, wellness, and workplace

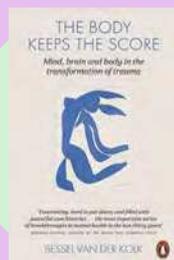
support that helped me get to where I am today. It was important to get specialist support relating to my experiences.”

For PTSD, a psychiatrist and psychologist may be needed for effective treatment. Psychiatrists look at mental and physical aspects of a person’s problems and they can also prescribe medication, while a psychologist uses their studies on the mind and human behaviour to treat mental health problems. Treatment with a psychologist usually involves what most people refer to as ‘therapy’ — talking through their feelings and experiences to work on overcoming problems. This is an important aspect to understand if you experience a traumatic event — many women who suffer such an experience may not realise that there are different treatment options available and also that you can request a different therapist if treatment doesn’t seem to be working.

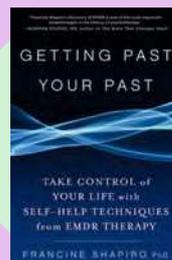
“I saw a therapist and a psychiatrist, as well as getting psycho-social support. I also found mindfulness and spiritual support very effective,” says Lydia. “My advice would be to simply reach out and ask for help, seek it. I would not be here today if I hadn’t had the support I had.”

## New reading

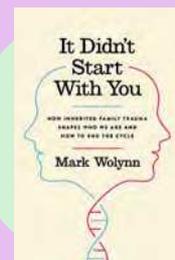
*Essential self-help reads on trauma and mental health.*



**THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE**  
BESSEL VAN DER KOLK



**GETTING PAST YOUR PAST**  
FRANCINE SHAPIRO



**IT DIDN'T START WITH YOU**  
MARK WOLYNN ■

# 6 BENEFITS OF REGULAR RUNNING

FROM FIRST TIME RUNNING TO TRAINING FOR A MARATHON, THE BENEFITS AND JOYS OF RUNNING ARE PLENTIFUL.

## 1. Strengthens joints

A study of nearly 75,000 runners in Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise reported that running doesn't increase your risk of osteoarthritis, as some experts once believed.

In fact, that study showed that regular runners were half as likely to suffer from knee osteoarthritis, compared with walkers. That's because every time you go for a run, you stress your bones and cartilage, just like your muscles, causing them to spring back stronger.

## 2. Heart health

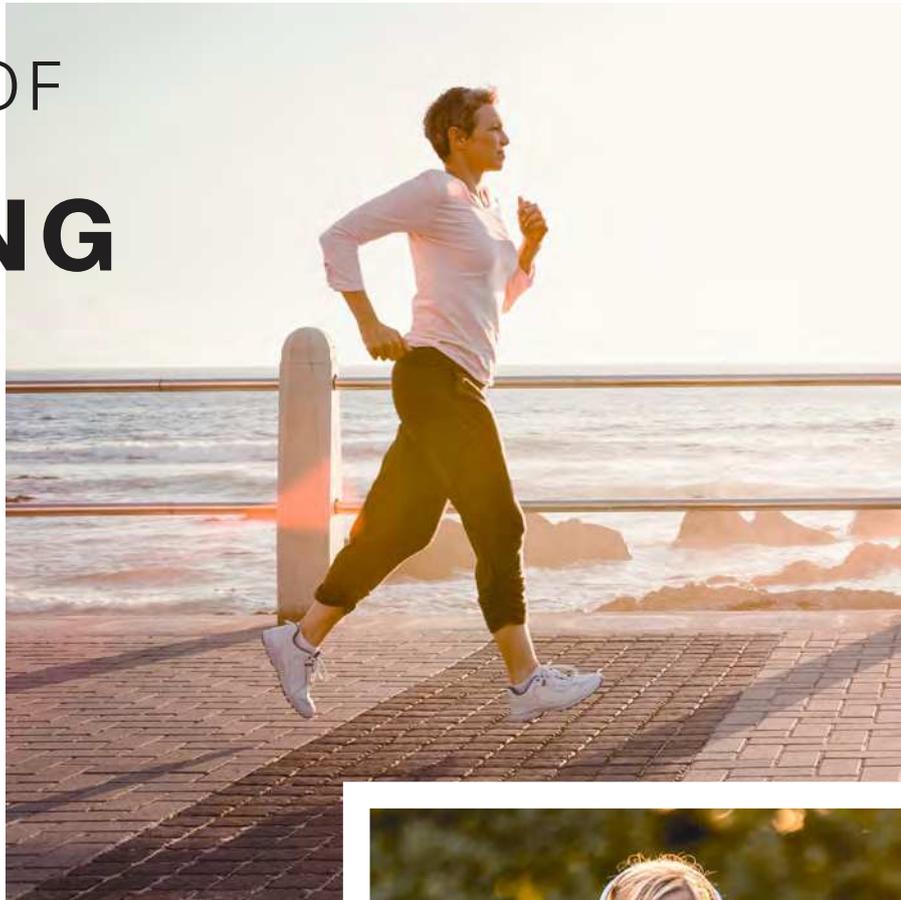
Worried about heart disease? Running has been found to help strengthen your heart muscle, aiding in preventing heart attacks, as well as lowering blood pressure. It has also been shown to reduce the risk of other conditions including diabetes. If you're new, though, the key is to start slowly and not push yourself too far, too fast.

## 3. Improves flexibility

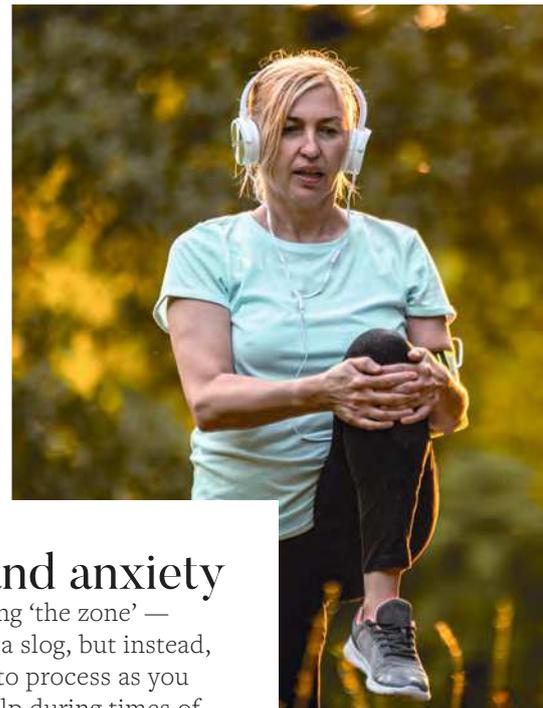
Personal trainer Helena Shirley says, "Warming up and cooling down should be a part of your running routine. Regular stretching not only helps to lengthen muscles and improve your flexibility, it also strengthens them through their full range of motion. This allows your joints to move freely and efficiently when running or simply during everyday life, which can improve performance and reduce injury risk." Stretching after a run also makes you feel so energised — think of it as a reward after all your hard work.

## 4. Builds core

Running doesn't just give your legs and glutes a great workout. It makes your core work hard, too. It really challenges your deep core muscles, including your obliques. These deep muscles play an important role in stabilising your spine and help to prevent back problems. Many regular runners develop that all-over leanness, too. Does regular running mean we never have to do any more abdominal crunches? Sign us up.



Running outside gives you a boost of the all-important vitamin D, for healthy bones and improved moods.



## 5. Fights stress and anxiety

Many runners talk about entering 'the zone' — where the exercise is no longer a slog, but instead, a space to allow your thoughts to process as you take it step by step. This can help during times of stress and anxiety when your thoughts can feel like too much. Plus, during exercise your body releases the feelgood hormones known as endorphins to help further reduce stress.

## 6. Improves brain power

It's one of the newer areas of research into the benefits of running — but since running increases blood flow and your heart rate, it sounds logical that it could fire up brain power, too. A 2018 study found that half an hour of running improves your 'cortical flicker frequency', which is linked to your brain's ability to process and absorb information. This is thought to help increase focus.

Running can even improve your sleeping habits, as you fall asleep faster with a better, more sound sleep quality, researchers have found.

## 48 hours in Lisbon

P66-69



## 30 Days Wild

P80-81



# Home & AWAY

Our fabulous selection of style and travel tips will give you fresh ideas for summer. Get set for inspiration.

## Art, culture and history in Bristol

P72-75



Spend 48 hours in Lisbon with us. Adrienne Webster gives you an insider's look at a city known for its endless supply of sun, sea and charm. From dining and drinks to walking tours and the perfect accommodation, we give you all the info you need to make the most of your short break to this gorgeous European city.

Appreciate the joys of British cities with an essential guide to art, culture and history in Bristol. Independent shops and restaurants line the streets with fascinating historical sites waiting around almost every corner. On page 72, Kirsty Nutkins explores this West Country gem to find out why it's the ideal weekend getaway.

What would our home and away section be without some gardening advice from our expert, Mark Lane? This month, he helps you compile your June to-do list before sharing his easy guide to creating the perfect rock garden. Finally, turn to page 80 to find out how you can make the most of the wildlife in your area this summer. »

## Mark Lane

P76-79





# 48 hours in Lisbon

SUN, SEA AND CHARM, LISBON HAS IT ALL, WRITES **ADRIANNE WEBSTER.**

**F**or city breaks offering tradition, history and culture in equal measure, you'd be hard pushed to find anywhere better than Portugal's capital city, Lisbon.

Voted the World's Leading City Break Destination in 2019, Lisbon has become something of an 'it' city in recent years, and it's not hard to see why. Its sun-kissed streets receive over 290 days of sunshine a year and walking through them, you get the sense that culture is simply seeped into the architecture. The patterned tiles for which Portugal is famous adorn pavements, shops and quaint houses, and melancholic Fado music pours out of bars and restaurants.

An easy three hour flight from the UK, it's the perfect destination for those seeking a long weekend for some essential R&R — or simply to top up on those delicious Pastéis de Nata!



Right: St Anthony's Church is a golden wonder. Below: The alluring (and hilly!) streets of Lisbon.



grandmothers barbecue locally caught sardines and cod on their doorsteps.

Be prepared; you'll need a decent pair of shoes for taking in the sights. The hills are not forgiving, and you'll soon

end up on your backside in a pair of flipflops or towering heels, so pop a pair of your most stylish trainers in your bag and you'll be golden.

Head down to the Fado Museum to learn about the region's most enduring cultural legacies, fado music. Melancholic, but beautiful, the art form is revered and treasured. Wander the corridors of the exhibition listening to the city's most renowned fado musicians along the way.

For an extra dose of culture, a short 20-minute walk along the seafront will bring you to the Museu Nacional do Azulejo (National Tile Museum). Founded in 1509, its collection takes visitors on a journey through the history of the iconic tiles and is decorated in full Portuguese baroque splendour.

You'll want to bring along a camera to get some shots of the gold gilded ceilings and walls in the chapel dedicated to St. Anthony.

Having worked up a considerable thirst and hunger, we headed back into the Baixa (downtown) for the evening where we dined at the hip and bustling Ao 26. Beloved for their next-level artisanal vegan food, it's wise to make a reservation ahead of your visit. If you stop by, make sure to sample the Barranco Longo rosé; a fruity, full-bodied wine that's made locally in the Algarve. Heaven! »

## Day 1

On the way from the airport to our accommodation, our kind (and talkative) taxi driver stopped off at Miradouro da Senhora do Monte (Our Lady of the Hill), a look-out point offering an uninterrupted 250-degree panoramic view of the city. With bursting pride, he pointed out neighbourhoods, the bridge in the distance and the Castle of Saint George. For introductions to a new place, it's hard to top.

Stunned by the incredible view, we then bundled back into the taxi to be dropped off at our Airbnb, a whitewashed apartment in arguably Lisbon's hippest neighbourhood, Mouraria.

The labyrinth-like streets of this area began as a Moorish ghetto after King Afonso Henriques banished Muslims from inside the castle walls. Because of this, the area was largely forgotten about during the gentrification of the rest of the city, and it's due to its diverse community and enduring cultural heritage that it's emerged as one of the most authentic areas in the city.

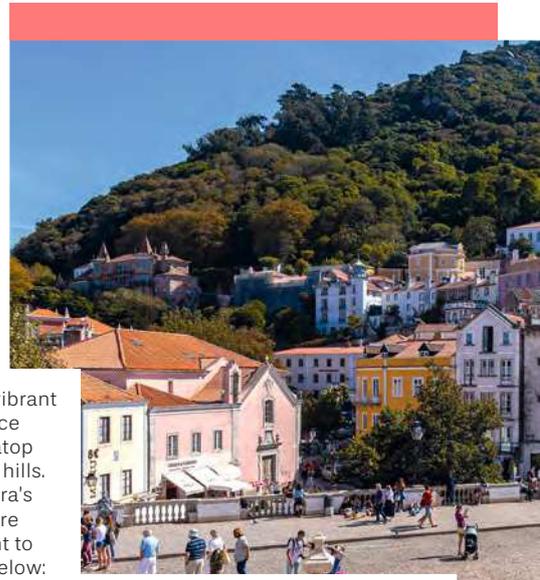
Unpacked and ready to explore, we fuelled up at Zé da Mouraria, an authentic Portuguese tasca (tavern), offering delectable dishes such as roasted cod and garlic steak. The queues are regularly out of the door, and portions are belt-busting, so make sure you're hungry.

We then took a leisurely stroll around Mouraria, taking in their plentiful street artworks and making our way into Alfama, a delightful network of cobbled streets and ancient houses where young Ronaldos play in the street and

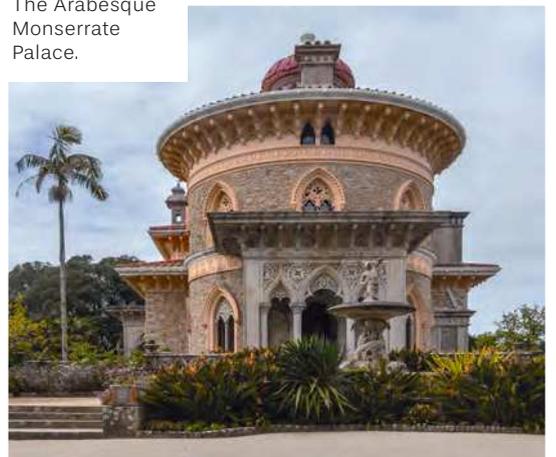
The ethos behind Ao 26's food is respecting the environment and being passionate about sourcing great ingredients.



Above left: The Rossio fountain found in Lisbon's main square. Above: The delicious Pastéis de Nata, a glorious custard tart topped with cinnamon. Left: Lisbon is famous for its gorgeous Azulejo tiles, which date back as far as the 13th century.



Left: The vibrant Pena Palace sits high atop the Sintra hills. Right: Sintra's town centre is a delight to explore. Below: The Arabesque Monserrate Palace.



The mansion and gardens of Quinta da Regaleira are a sight to behold. While away an afternoon taking in the mysterious wells, caves and formal gardens.



## Day 2

The next morning, we woke early to grab the 30-min train to Sintra from the main train station, the Gare do Oriente. The jewel in Portugal's crown, Sintra is an other-worldly UNESCO World Heritage Site boasting lush forested hills, glittering palaces and quaint shops full of locally-made knick-knacks.

Sitting in the Serra mountains, this resort town was beloved by Portugal's royalty for its cooler climes and shady exotic gardens to enjoy in the roasting summer months. Now, it pulls in tourists looking to explore its historical palaces and to get a break from the buzz of the city.

We made a beeline for the enchanting estate known as Quinta da Regaleira. The mansion and gardens hint at its mysterious past; from paganism to Free Masonry to Portuguese romanticism, you can spot symbols representing cultures past as you explore.

One of the main draws is the 'Initiation Well', which the builder, Carvalho Monteiro, said he built for spiritual reasons. He explained it was designed to represent the nine circles of Dante's Inferno. As you walk down the stone staircases, you definitely get the feeling of descending into a dark and mystical place.

But the real attraction is the four-hectare estate's majestic gardens; a place that Lord Byron once described as "a glorious Eden". Its shadowy grottoes,



lakes, formal gardens and waterfalls are a playground for walkers and history lovers alike.

Guided tours are on offer, but the real joy is in walking around and discovering nooks and crannies for yourself. Don't miss the café on the way out for a quick pick-me-up (an espresso and Pasteis de Nata if you're anything like me!) and to take in the gorgeous marble columns and gothic architecture of the mansion.

Back in the main part of the town, and you'd be hard pushed to find a better lunch than at Taverna do Município where the welcome is as warm as the food. This restaurant-cum-wine bar has a variety of wines and ports on offer, too, if you fancy something to sip on while enjoying the sun.

While most of the tourists are drawn to the Pena Palace, opt for an afternoon at the stunning Monserrate Palace,

the 17th-century Moorish villa set in an exotic garden lush with plants and palm trees. The palace is a glorious mix of Arabesque and gothic design and the detailing on the interior walls is something to marvel over.

If you'd like to make the most of Sintra and stay overnight, head 10-mins away to the Penga Longha Resort ([penhalonga.com/en](http://penhalonga.com/en)). Offering luxury with a capital L, this hotel offers breathtaking views across the Sintra mountains, features a golf course and exclusive spa, plus eight award-winning restaurants. Prices from 150 euros per night.

For stays in the main city, the Santiago de Alfama ([santiagodealfama.com](http://santiagodealfama.com)) is a boutique hotel with stunning rooms, and offers a beauty bar and first-class restaurant. Make sure to book a private boat tour at reception to explore the river in style before you jet home.



Enjoy luxe living at the Penga da Longha Resort, just outside Sintra, where you can take in the stunning views, pamper yourself at the spa, and dine at the award-winning restaurants.



### TRAVEL TAKEAWAYS

Book a free guided walking tour with New Europe Tours.

It's the best way to take in as many sights as possible.

**[neweuropetours.eu/sandemans-tours/lisbon/free-tour-of-lisbon/](http://neweuropetours.eu/sandemans-tours/lisbon/free-tour-of-lisbon/)**



If you lose your bearings, head down towards the river — all roads lead to the Baixa (downtown).



Bring euros, as many bars, cafes and restaurants are still cash-only.



Hop on one of the famous trams along to Belém to see the 16th-century Belém Tower and the cluster of museums nearby.



Flights from £92 return with British Airways from London. ■

# Enjoy a staycation in Cornwall

THIS BREATHTAKING TOUR COMBINES THE BEAUTIFUL HIGHLIGHTS OF CORNWALL IN JUST A SHORT BREAK, FEATURING THE INCREDIBLE TINTAGEL CASTLE, LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN AND ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT.

Cornwall is blessed with both stunning natural features and a colourful history of maritime trade and smuggling. As well as impressive coastlines, tiny harbours and fishing villages full of character, you will be able to immerse yourself in what it means to be Cornish. Imagine experiencing a time-honoured Cornish cream tea overlooking the harbour, or visiting a traditional cyder farm to see how the delicious, famous local drink is made.



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COMFORTABLE WAY  
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**Left:** One of the biggest fishing ports in Cornwall, Mevagissey, is a picturesque village for a leisurely lunch or a coffee overlooking the harbour.  
**Above:** St Michael's Mount boasts a stunning medieval castle. Enjoy a scenic walk across, or reach by boat during high tide.

Images © Shutterstock

# Art, culture, history in Bristol

WITH ITS VIBRANT ARTS SCENE, INDEPENDENT SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS PLUS FASCINATING HISTORIC SIGHTS, THIS WEST COUNTRY GEM IS IDEAL FOR A WEEKEND GETAWAY, SAYS **KIRSTY NUTKINS**.

**B**ristol has regularly been voted the best place to live in the UK, as well as the UK's happiest city. And it's easy to understand why. Not only is it steeped in history, with stunning Georgian architecture and famous landmarks such as the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the SS Great Britain — one of the most important historic ships in the world — but it's also renowned for its creativity and diverse culture.

There are museums, theatres and galleries galore, and a vibrant street art scene — thanks, of course, to the city's famous former resident, Banksy. And for foodies, there are more independent restaurants, cafes and bars than you can shake a stick at.

In fact, independence is something Bristol prizes highly; it famously has its own elected mayor and even its own currency, the 'Bristol Pound', to support the local economy.

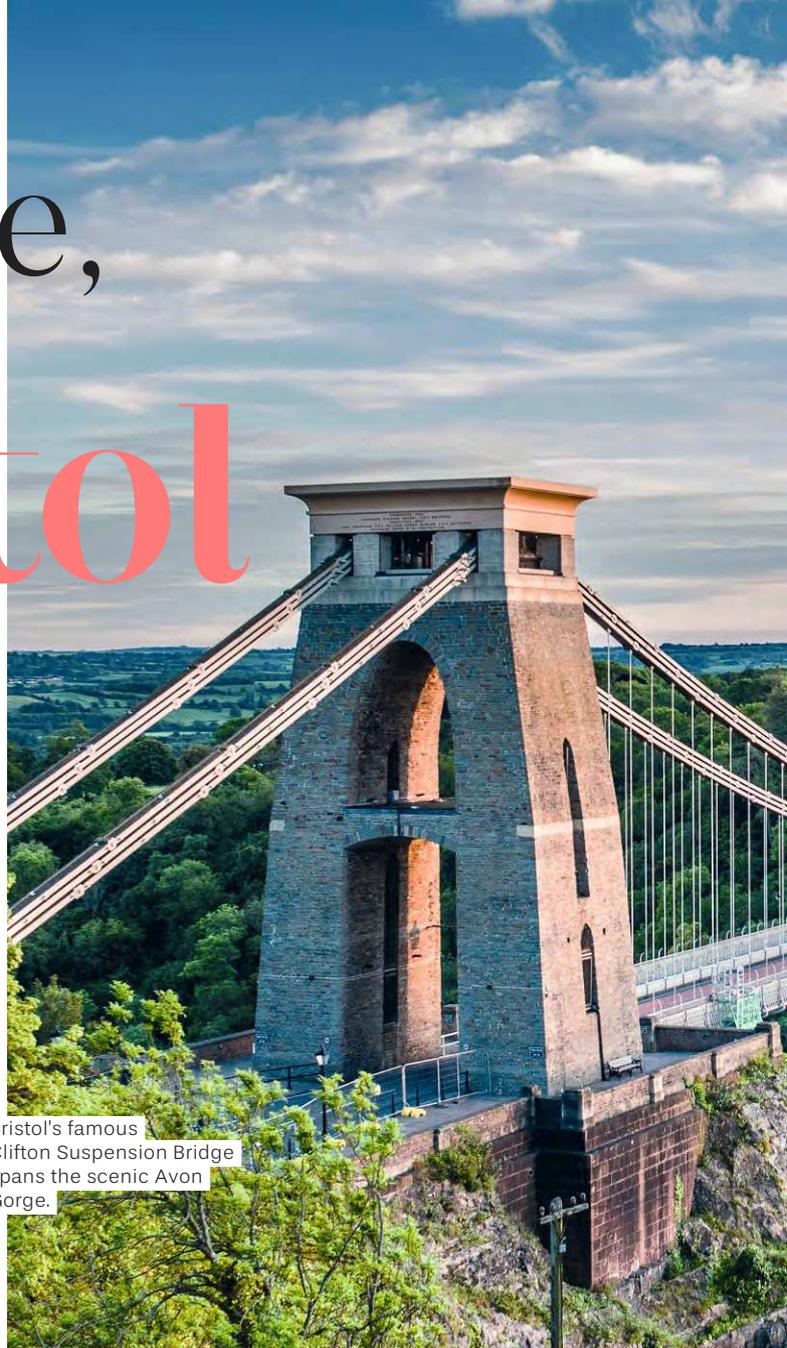
Before you pack your bags, though, read on to find out about the must-visit neighbourhoods, top restaurants and hotels, and the attractions you won't want to miss...



## Clifton

One of Bristol's most sought-after neighbourhoods, Clifton is nestled close to Bristol city centre and is home to Georgian architecture, great shopping and cool cafes, as well as some of the area's biggest attractions.

**WHAT TO DO:** Start out on Whiteladies Road and wander to Clifton Village for some retail therapy (both have a wealth of independent boutiques), then walk across the magnificent Clifton Suspension Bridge, spanning the deep trench of the Avon Gorge. On the other side, you'll find Leigh Woods National Nature Reserve, where you can enjoy scenic walking trails and views back across the city. A trip here is a great way to wind down and relax in nature.



Bristol's famous Clifton Suspension Bridge spans the scenic Avon Gorge.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Rosemarino has won best breakfast and best Italian restaurant at the Bristol Good Food awards for three years on the trot. For brunch, the all-day breakfast menu features the classics such as eggs Benedict, as well as spicy shakshuka and 'Tommy's 1 Pan': ham hock with chopped sausage, onions, mushrooms and potatoes, cooked with eggs and served with toasted focaccia. In the evening, they change their menu to provide hearty pasta, risottos, gnocchi, homemade bread and antipasti sharing platters.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Number Thirty Eight is housed within a grand, double-fronted former Merchant's residence right on the edge of the Clifton Downs. A blend of original Georgian features and modern luxury, there are also plenty of nods to Bristol's seafaring history, with trunks, chests and maritime paintings throughout the common areas and within the 12 guest bedrooms (which also have traditional roll-top and freestanding copper baths). A rooftop terrace is ideal for cocktails or a cream tea in the warmer months, with views of the city and the Downs. From £115 a night.



## Harbourside

Bristol harbourside started life as a busy dockyard and industrial area. In recent years it has seen massive regeneration, with the likes of Wapping Wharf — a sprawling modern space full of restaurants, bars, shops and hotels — transforming it into one of the most popular spots in the city. Wear trainers or comfy shoes here as you'll probably do a lot of walking.

**WHAT TO DO:** Step on board Brunel's SS Great Britain. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who also designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, it was the first ship of its kind to cross the Atlantic back in 1845. You'll also find Bristol Aquarium in the area, and the renowned Arnolfini centre for international contemporary arts which offers a diverse programme of exhibitions, artist performances, music and dance events, as well as poetry and book readings.

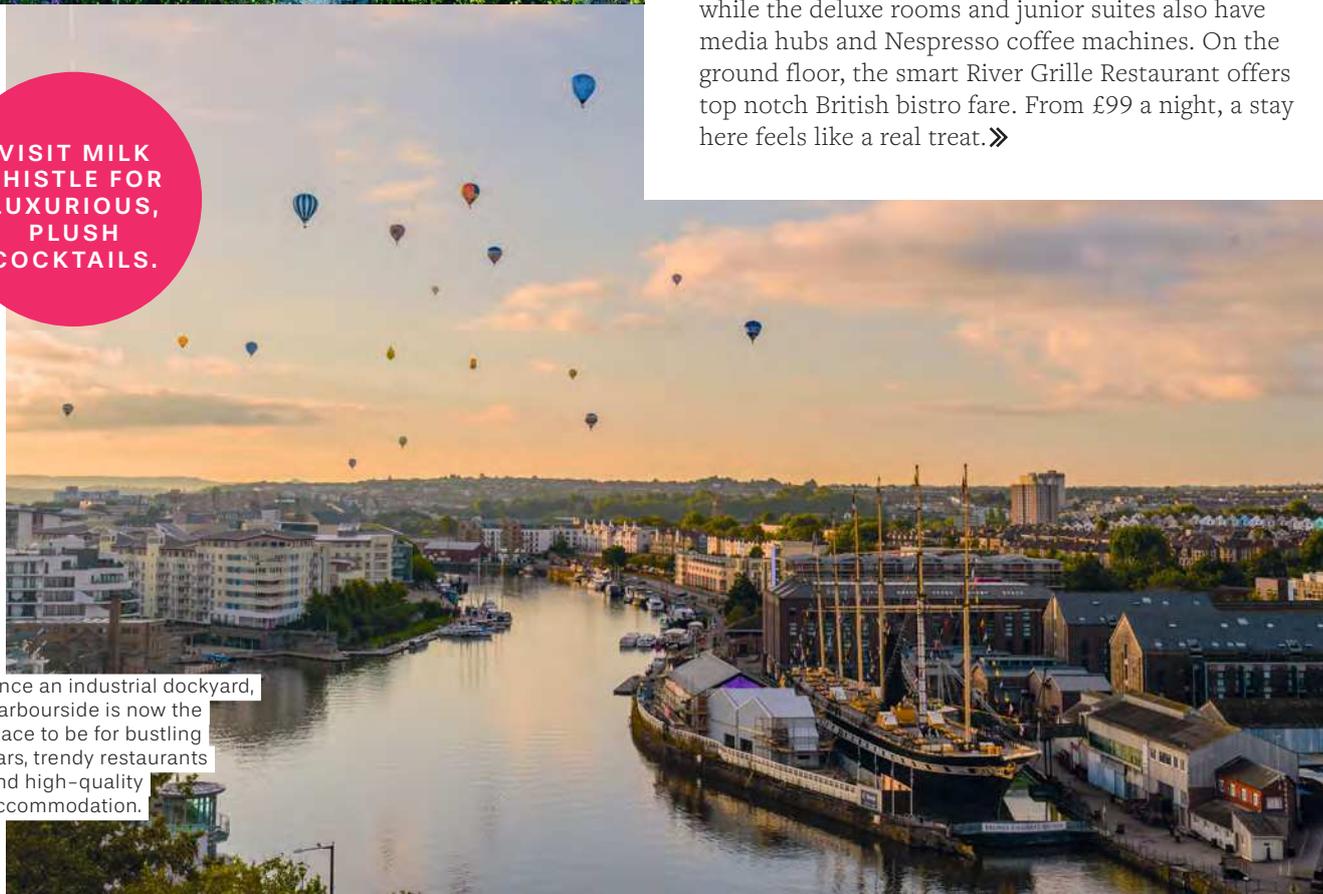
**WHERE TO EAT:** Harbourside is a top foodie destination attracting diners from far and wide thanks to restaurants like Box-E and Tare. Award-winning Woky Ko is the brainchild of former MasterChef finalist Larkin Cen and features modern twists on familiar Asian dishes, with exciting flavour combinations. Head there for lunch or dinner to tuck into Bao (Asian steamed buns), Xiao (sharing plates) and delicious noodle and rice dishes. After dinner, seek out Milk Thistle, a swish Prohibition-style bar with an extensive cocktail menu.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Ideally situated right on the waterfront, The Bristol was originally a motel in the 1960s and is now a listed building. It has a rather brutal concrete honeycomb façade, but inside you'll find a chic five-star contemporary hotel.

The rooms are luxurious, with generous beds, duck-down duvets and Temple Spa products in the en-suites, while the deluxe rooms and junior suites also have media hubs and Nespresso coffee machines. On the ground floor, the smart River Grille Restaurant offers top notch British bistro fare. From £99 a night, a stay here feels like a real treat. »

VISIT MILK THISTLE FOR LUXURIOUS, PLUSH COCKTAILS.

Once an industrial dockyard, Harbourside is now the place to be for bustling bars, trendy restaurants and high-quality accommodation.





## City Centre and Old City

The bustling heart of Bristol has a lot to offer, from its famous shopping quarter with more than 500 stores to its authentic cobble-stoned old town. You'll also find theatres, museums and historic sights around every corner.

**WHAT TO DO:** Marvel at the medieval architecture inside Bristol's beautiful and historic Cathedral, located on College Green, then head to Bristol Museum and Art Gallery ([bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery](http://bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery)), which has everything from Egyptian mummies to dinosaur remains. Round off your day with some retail therapy and a walk in the old city, to the northeast of St Augustine's Reach. These beautiful streets remain much as they did hundreds of years ago and they're so atmospheric. Make sure you stroll through grassy Queen Square, too, which is surrounded by the elegant terraces of 18th-century houses.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Casamia is a Michelin-starred restaurant within a Grade II listed former Victorian hospital. Voted the 10th best restaurant in the country in 2019, it offers modern European fare and fine wines, and the pièce de résistance is its amazing 14-course tasting menu. With space for just 35 diners, you'll need to book well in advance, though.

VISIT  
COLLEGE  
GREEN FOR A  
BREAK FROM  
BUSTLE



Book a stay with a difference at Bristol Harbour Hotel & Spa, a former bank building. They have their spa in the old vaults.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Set in the former Lloyds and Midlands Bank HQ, Bristol Harbour Hotel & Spa has much to seduce weekend visitors — an award-winning restaurant, Jetty, housed in the grand former banking hall; a cavernous spa, tucked away in the old vaults; and plush but quirky guest rooms, with jazzy wallpapers, vibrantly upholstered furniture, Egyptian cotton sheets and White Company toiletries. Some rooms also have a large freestanding bath in the bedroom. From around £145 a night.



## Gloucester Road and Stokes Croft

Located to the north of the city centre, these two streets form their own micro-location and are known for their bohemian vibe, with vibrant street art, fantastic retro and vintage shops, and independent restaurants.

**WHAT TO DO:** Bristol boy Banksy's works can be found in and around the city, and Stokes Croft — known as the cultural quarter — is where you'll find his famous *Mild Mild West* mural. The whole area feels like an outdoor gallery, with colourful graffiti transforming many of the walls and buildings.

Keep walking north and you'll hit Gloucester Road, credited as the longest street of independent shops in Europe. Have a look in Room 212, a shop and gallery which sells art by local artists, and then head to The Reclaimers Reclamation, an Aladdin's cave packed with antiques, vintage items and upcycled goods.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Tapas restaurant Poco, in Stokes Croft, serves up seasonal, locally-produced food and has won a fair few awards since it opened its doors in 2011. The fairly-priced small plates are delicious — you'll go a long way to find a patatas bravas that tastes quite so good. Afterwards, have a swift one at Croft Ales, which has great handcrafted, small batch beer and live music.

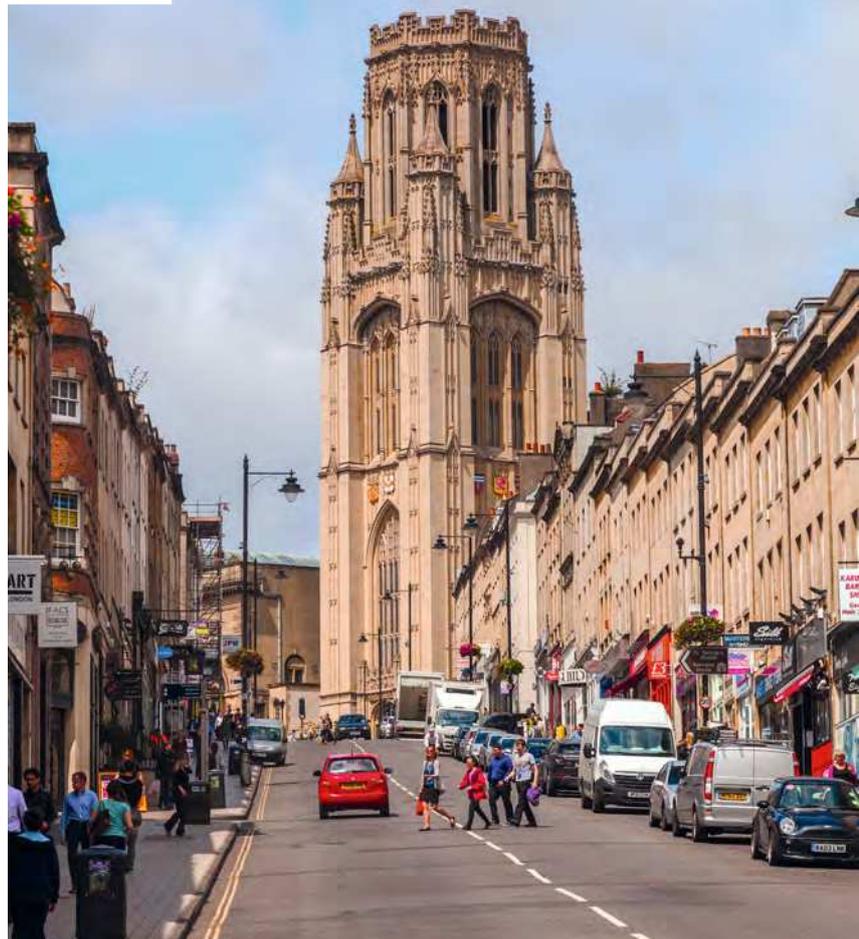
**WHERE TO STAY:** Hotel du Vin is just a 10-minute stroll from Stokes Croft and is one of Bristol's finest hotels. Housed in a collection of converted 18th-century sugar warehouses, the building is Grade II listed with preserved industrial features (exposed brick and cast-iron pillars) and there are plenty of beautiful polished wood floors and leather chairs, giving it the feel of an exclusive private members' club.

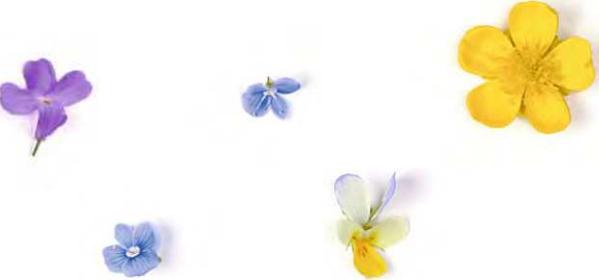
The 40 guest rooms range from deluxe studios to glamorous loft suites, but even standard rooms have king-sized beds, fine linen, rolltop tubs and walk-in monsoon showers. From £85 a night. ■



TAPAS FANS SHOULD TRY POCO FOR LOCALLY-SOURCED FOOD

Bristol's shops make it an essential visit





# Your best ever garden

with  
**MARK LANE**

**MARK** SHARES HIS ESSENTIAL JUNE TO-DO LIST ALONGSIDE AN EXPERT GUIDE TO CREATING THE PERFECT ROCKERY.



**PLATINUM EXPERT**  
Mark Lane

You may recognise Mark as a presenter of BBC *Gardener's World*. A lover of colour, Mark encourages a creative and fun approach. His practical guides will keep your garden looking amazing all year round.



## Taking stock of your garden in June

With the hotter weather come warm and moist soils. Plants start flowering and weeds begin growing — so there is plenty to do in June. This month is also a great time to plan for the future so that you can enjoy flowers and vegetables right through winter. Let's begin.

Hardy annuals that you sowed in spring should be thinned out. Don't think that the more you leave in, the better the display. Each plant will need space to grow, 30 centimetres to be exact, so be brutal. This will allow the leaves to photosynthesise; the roots can establish underground and make for a healthier plant in general.

## Beautiful biennials

If you love biennials such as wallflowers, now is the perfect time to sow them.

Sow in either seed beds or pots. Leave them to grow, thin out and these will be ready to plant out into their final positions come autumn. I love poppies and if sown thinly in June, or scattered throughout the border, these will flower in eight weeks' time.

**TRY THIS** — Fill gaps in borders with bedding plants such as rudbeckia (Cone flowers), antirrhinum (Snapdragons), impatiens (Touch-me-not), salvia (sage) and begonia. Keep well-hydrated especially on very hot days; water morning and evening.

## Extending your flower displays

June is the time to extend your gorgeous flower displays by planting autumn-flowering bulbs, such as the meadow





tie in stems as horizontally as possible. This inhibits sap flow, stimulates more side shoots and hence more flowers.

Early-flowering clematis should be pruned back as well, but only after flowering. Macropetal varieties should also be pruned. Beautiful flowering shrubs such as philadelphus (Mock oranges), weigela and deutzia need to be pruned once flowering has finished.

If you don't do these now, the new growth may not have enough ripening time to flower next year. Plums, peaches and nectarines also need to be pruned in June as this prevents the risk of silver leaf and bacterial canker.

**TRY THIS** — if you don't have much time this month, simply mow and trim the edges of your lawn. A tidy lawn will make your garden look so much better.



## Help your fruits and veggies thrive

There is a lot to be getting on with in the veggie patch or on the allotment. Brassicas and leeks can be sown now as well as chicory, ready for a winter harvest. »



saffron, Colchicum (Naked ladies), Cyclamen hederifolium (Ivy-leaved cyclamen), Cyclamen coum (Eastern sowbread) and the egg-yolk-coloured Sternbergia lutea. These will look great in a rock garden, at the base of trees and shrubs, or in pots and containers.

If you also stagger your planting of gladioli and Acidanthera murielae (Abyssinian gladiolus), you will have blooms right into late summer and into early autumn.

A lot of early-flowering plants such as oriental poppies, pulmonarias and delphiniums (Larkspur) will benefit from being cut back to the ground. Feed and water to see new foliage appear and, if you're lucky, a second flush of flowers on the poppies and delphiniums.

## Pruning and cutting

Pruning and cutting back really starts this month. Earlier flowering plants such as rhododendrons need to be deadheaded and fed with an ericaceous plant food. Faded blooms on shrub, bush and climbing roses need to be removed to encourage more flowers.

For climbing and rambling roses, you want to





Carrots, French beans and sugar snap peas should be sown in succession for a regular supply.

With the warmer weather, tomatoes and beans can come out of the greenhouse or out from under glass and planted at the base of supports and structures. Keep these well-watered and fed. Tie in frequently if required, and you will be rewarded with delicious flavours.

Remember also to use companion plants such as tagetes, nasturtiums and calendula alongside your fruits and veggies.

Start harvesting radishes, spring cabbage, kale, carrots, first potatoes and artichokes. Try delicious herbs, rhubarb and strawberries. And if some beetroots, lettuce and carrots seem overcrowded, gently pull out a few young plants and enjoy them as baby veg.

## Essential to-dos

- ✔ Mow the lawn once a week this month, and feed it to ensure lush green growth.
- ✔ Repot houseplants into fresh compost, then water and feed once a week.
- ✔ Give your summer-bedding plants in borders, pots and containers a liquid feed to get them off to a good start.
- ✔ Keep on top of weeds and hoe your borders between plants to keep them tidy and weed-free.
- ✔ Open vents in the greenhouse on warm days, wet the floors every morning to increase humidity and apply shade paint or blinds to prevent the greenhouse from overheating.
- ✔ Water your pots and containers regularly — rainfall is not enough. Spot and treat pests and diseases like aphids, snails, mildew, rust and leaf spot.

### IN THE KNOW

South-facing planting encourages microclimates which heat up in sunshine, reflecting light.



Footstool, £45, **Denys & Fielding**

Tool set, £16.95, **Annabel James**

Pot decoration, £12.50, **Ella James**

Indoor fruit garden, £159, **Veritable**

### Spring essentials

Cherry tomato seed, £2.50, **B&Q**

Bench, £190, **Garden Trading**

# Creating the perfect ROCK GARDEN

ADD SOME PERSONALITY TO YOUR GARDEN WITH A ROCKERY THAT IS VIBRANT AND FULL OF LIFE.

## 1 Location, location, location

Choose a spot away from trees, shadows and shrubs as your plants will need maximum sunlight. Your rockery can be as big or as small as you wish, but remember alpine plants require full sun and good drainage.

## 2 Choosing the rocks

Your natural, multi-sized features can be real stone or artificial, but make sure they have character! 'Split faces' on rocks will reveal cragginess — reclaimed rocks in moss is the look you're after. You can age rocks by brushing yogurt and soil over them. After a short period of time, they will attract real moss and lichens.

For a more recycled approach, use old bricks, garden slabs, roof tiles and pathway edging — perfect conditions for alpiners and insects.

## 3 Arrangement is key

How you arrange your rocks is entirely up to you, but I would always recommend placing the large rocks first, positioning them to create a rocky outcrop. To make varied microclimates, place the rocks in different directions. Large rocks can be set in place with weed-free compost. Create little pockets of topsoil by forming horse-shoe shapes with smaller rocks.

Now it's time to add the compost to create planting areas. You'll need to mix equal amounts of either screened topsoil (no weeds or weed seed), compost leaf mould or grit. Use these in equal amounts.

## 4 Have fun with your decor

Small 9cm plants are perfectly sized; remove them from their pots, tease out roots and gently squeeze into planting pockets. You want to add texture, colour, and diversity of plants — try alpiners, hardy succulents, small-growing perennials and bulbs.

Hardy coastal plants that thrive by the sea — through battered winds and salty air — work well in rockeries.

**FOR TEXTURE:** *Festuca glauca* or the 'blue fescue' grass. This is short with steely blue foliage and looks

Make rocks with chicken wire, cement, coconut coir, perlite, polystyrene and water. Cut a length of wire, place in polystyrene pieces, mix one part cement and one and a half parts coconut coir. Fill and leave to set for at least 48 hours.

EXCESS POND SOIL CAN BE USED AS THE BASE FOR A BEAUTIFUL ROCK GARDEN.



wonderful drifted through a rockery and gravel. Creeping succulents like sedum or 'stonecrops' thrive in rockeries. *Sedum takesimense* has variegated scalloped leaves and chartreuse flowers.

**FOR WARM COLOURS:** *Sedum* 'wildfire' with its variegated leaves of dark red undersides and pale red-pink margins. Position next to blue fescues for a lovely and unique combination.

**FOR HEIGHT:** *Hylotelephium telephium* (Karfunkelstein) with its beetroot red-purple leaves and clusters of pink flowers. Saxifrage is a diverse group of plants with attractive foliage ranging from white to pink, as well as yellow — brilliant for softening hard edges.

**FOR STATEMENT THEMES:** Bees and butterflies love the blue-green foliage in *Dianthus cruentus*. Fill in evergreen mounds with *sempervivum* (houseleek). Miniature daffodils like *Narcissi Tête à tête*, dwarf tulips like lilac wonder, snowdrops, crocus and cyclamen will add dimension.

**FOR SUNNIER SPOTS:** Herbs like chamomile, thyme, oregano, chives and marjoram. Ferns and small hostas thrive in shade.

## 5 The finale

Finish with a layer of decorative stone or gravel and you are done! Remember, a rock garden can also be created in a pot or corner in smaller gardens, so no missing out for those without large green spaces. ■

# 30 days WILD



NATURE AND BEAUTY IS ALL AROUND US, BUT WE CAN BE GUILTY OF TAKING IT FOR GRANTED.

**MAIRI MULHERN**

SPEAKS TO EXPERTS AT THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN ENCOURAGE WILDLIFE IN YOUR AREA.

In the last year, peaceful woodland walks, lakeside cycles and colourful countryside strolls helped thousands escape from a reality otherwise saturated by worry. Feeling the prickle of sunshine on skin, or filling your lungs with crisp, cool air brought a sense of comfort and calm.

It's true that the hectic nature of work and life can steal our opportunities to relax with a book in the garden or take the time to gaze up at the clear blue skies of a summer morning. But The Wildlife Trusts have a campaign they think will help you appreciate and make the most of nature — no matter how busy life gets.

30 Days Wild challenges you to get out into the great outdoors every day in June and enjoy the best that Mother Nature has to offer. A record-breaking 650,000 people took part last year, performing "random acts of wildness".

In 2020, a five-year review from the University of Derby reported that participants felt happier and healthier after taking part, with positive effects lasting for up to two months afterwards.

Here are a few ways you can make a difference to how you feel throughout June. It's time to go wild!



## Finding peace in nature

Dom Higgins, head of health and education with The Wildlife Trusts, says, "Being active in nature helps us all to grow, live and age well. The more time we spend outside, the better we feel."

Your random act of wildness can be as simple as listening to birdsong in the morning, going for a 20-minute walk, starting a veggie patch or growing herbs from your windowsill.

The Wildlife Trusts' digital manager, Leanne Manchester, says, "What could be better than making time for yourself and connecting with nature for just a few moments of your day? It's fun, free and easy — and after such a challenging year, we definitely deserve it."





## Bring colour to your garden

At home, you can make your garden wilder by letting grass grow or planting wildflowers. Long grass welcomes bees and encourages birds to dig for worms.

Butterflies are drawn to the pink flowers in knapweed, and the striking gold and pink elephant hawk moth loves rosebay willowherbs.

Restoring hedgerows, meadows and ponds is essential for supporting all kinds of species and enabling them to move through landscapes — everywhere from your garden to the forests around your home.

If you live in an urban area, try installing window boxes or bird feeders. It's all about being creative and using the space available.

## The bigger picture

Just as important as practical work is talking to people about the importance of nature's recovery.

Speaking to family and friends, writing to your council or MP and getting others on board are vital parts of the puzzle.

The Wildlife Trusts' vision for the future is one where nature is in recovery and wildlife becomes more abundant; where people connect with nature on their doorstep, feeling healthier and happier in the world around them.

Register for 30 Days Wild, free at [wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild](http://wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild)



## Enchanting walks



### Wilverley Forest, Wilverley Wander trail 2.5 miles

During summer, Wilverley Inclosure is laced with thick patches of emerald broadleaves. The woodland is managed sustainably with conifer trees lining short, meandering paths to make way for cyclists and walkers. Hampshire, BH25 5TZ

### Symonds Yat, Mailscot Wood Trail 2 miles

Boasting spectacular views across the River Wye, you'll see deep blue water bordered by green hillsides and spring sunsets that belong on the cover of National Geographic. It's a challenging walk, but an afternoon under leafy canopies is a lovely way to unwind. Monmouthshire, NP25 3NG

### Alice Holt Forest, Lodge Pond Trail 2.5 miles

This walk leads you into the quiet Alice Holt Forest. Take a moment to relax by the tranquil Lodge Pond, believed to have been created by medieval monks to breed carp, and watch dragonflies and damselflies race across the surface. Farnham, GU10 4LS

### Haldon Forest, The Butterfly Trail 4 miles

Wander into this peaceful forest, where rare butterflies like the pearl-bordered fritillary bathe in sunshine, fluttering through the trees as you walk. You'll also see stunning views of Teign Valley. Exeter, EX6 7XR

### Maes Hiraddug, Big Pool Wood Trail 2 miles

A wonderful reed bed filled with wildflowers and birdsong. Circular walks around the pool begin at the boardwalk where hides let you see wildlife up close — great for a trip with the grandkids. Beware of slightly uneven ground. Dyserth, Rhyl, Wales LL18 6LR

Find guides at [wildlifetrusts.org/choose-your-adventure](http://wildlifetrusts.org/choose-your-adventure) ■



Those who live in cities have a **20% higher risk of developing anxiety disorders compared to rural areas**



Physically active people have up to **30% reduced risk of developing depression**



A study by the Mental Health Foundation found that **62% of UK adults** said going for a walk helped them **cope with Covid-19 lockdowns**

# TALKING TWEAKMENTS

WHETHER YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT IT OR HAVE ALREADY TAKEN THE PLUNGE, THERE'S MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT FACIAL 'TWEAKMENTS'. AESTHETIC EXPERT DR NESTOR SPEAKS TO **ADRIANNE WEBSTER** ABOUT WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND WHAT CLIENTS CAN EXPECT FROM THEIR FIRST TREATMENT.



**AS** we go through life and our appearance changes, it can be tempting for some of us to have a little nip here and a little tuck there.

With new "tweakments" becoming available that offer softer, more natural-looking results, options are increasing, too. We put some of the most asked questions to our expert, Dr Nestor, who runs an aesthetic clinic in Edinburgh. He explains what beginners can expect from treatments like fillers and threading and what you need to look out for.

“The aim isn't to look twenty years younger, that's silly. It's to achieve a fresher, natural look, discreetly.”

**Q: What are the most popular treatments with mature women that you offer?**

**A:** Fillers — they help to restore youthful features. The aim isn't to look twenty years younger, that's silly. It's to achieve a rested, fresher, natural look discreetly. Many come in a little apprehensive about filler, but through the consultation, any concerns are addressed. When we look at before and after pictures of my work, they start to appreciate how fillers, when used correctly, are perfect for helping them to look their best.

**Q: Which areas can be treated with fillers?**

**A:** The entire face, and many parts of the body. When we understand the ageing process, we can start to deliver effective treatments that are natural. Adding small volumes to key areas throughout the face adds up to something wonderful.

**Q: Which treatment would you advise for someone's first time trying a 'tweakment', and what should they expect from their consultation?**

**A:** The only treatment worth having is the one that addresses the patient's concern, so I can't specify. It's very important that the clinician takes time to

understand their patient's real concern, which isn't necessarily what they are asking for.

When patients say, 'I want this line filled because it makes me look tired', what they are really saying is, 'I feel I look tired. I think it's this line that's to blame'. A good clinician will not prioritise the line, but how the patient feels. Tiredness always comes from the eyes. Raising a drooping brow and softening the appearance of eye bags will treat the patient's concerns.

**Q: Which treatments would you most recommend for women over 50 for gaining a sense of youthfulness?**

**A:** The key is to focus on softening any negative messages, like tiredness, sadness or sagginess that the face is communicating.

By restoring youthful features (for example, the height of the brow or cheek), we can start to open the eyes and lift the jowls. A thorough consultation is always a must.

**Q: Your website says, "Never 'done', always discreet." Which treatments would you recommend as giving the most natural-looking results?**

**A:** I take a lot of time getting to know and understand my patients, as well as taking time



**In the KNOW**

**Guidance has now been issued for aesthetic practitioners which advises them not to provide dermal filler treatment either two weeks before or three weeks after Covid-19 vaccination due to some people experiencing their fillers 'puffing up' slightly, post-vaccine.**

to examine them. We all have favourable and not so favourable facial features. The key is to soften the unfavourable ones and help the favourable ones shine.

**Q: You also offer diet and lifestyle services. Is there anything we can do in those areas to help with our appearance?**

**A:** Eat, sleep, move. There has been a lot of controversy about what constitutes a healthy diet, how much sleep we should get and how much we should exercise. It is clear now that eating a more plant-based diet, sleeping for seven to eight hours and exercising regularly will help to improve our health and quality of life. All this has a positive impact on ageing well. And wear sunscreen, a lot of it, every day.

**Q: Are threads a good option for someone who would like a lifted look without having to opt for a full facelift?**

**A:** Non-surgical treatments such as threads and fillers deliver exceptional results. Surgery has the benefit of lasting longer. Some treatments are better carried out non-surgically, and others surgically. It's definitely worth having the

conversation with your clinician to figure out which best meets your needs and expectations.

**Q: Is there anything we can do to help brighten and lift eyes that might be starting to look a little droopy?**

**A:** Absolutely! Volume (filler) in the temple, below the brow and along the cheekbone will lift the tail of the brow back to its youthful height, give support indirectly to the lower eyelid and soften the hollows below the eye. It's a treatment I perform several times a day, every day.

**Q: How can frown lines be remedied?**

**A:** Lines etched into our skin are a direct result of sun damage caused decades ago. The first thing we need to do is start to protect our skin with sunscreen and then address the damage with clinical grade skin care. BOTOX® is a protein that stops the communication between nerve and muscle. Therefore it will stop the muscle from contracting. If we take away the ability to frown (which incidentally research shows makes us happier), then the overlying skin gets to relax.



Above and left: Examples of Dr Nestor's clients before and after they have had 'tweakments'. Fillers can help to brighten and revitalise.



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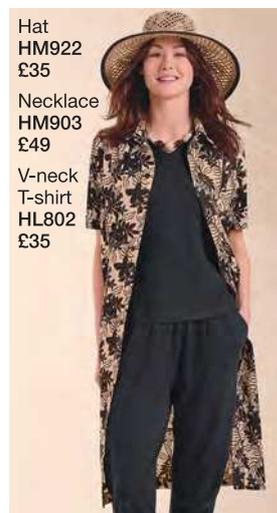
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# Boo and Dottie TAKE A TREND

OUR RESIDENT STYLE EXPERTS SHARE THEIR INSIDER SECRETS TO ACHIEVING '70S SUMMER GLAMOUR WITH EASE.



## Boo Hill

I think the 1970s were one of the most stylish decades of all time, so I'm really happy to see that flamboyant fashion is back in style this summer. A key retro trend that continues to inspire the designers and high street alike is fabulous maxi dress.

A good maxi dress is in my view one of this season's wardrobe essentials, as it is so versatile and there are a myriad of new ways to wear it. Bought wisely, and styled cleverly, you will be able to wear it through to autumn and beyond. This style of dress is perfect for layering, making it a year-round must-have. For maximum impact, you could team your dress with statement accessories in the form of fabulous wedges, large sunglasses and a floppy hat. Or for a more dressy feel, pair with a blazer, bold earrings or a belt if you want to define your waist. If you thought a maxi dress wasn't your style, do give it a go this time round — you may be surprised how quickly it becomes a favourite.

Blue china print maxi dress, £55, **Joe Browns**

Sunglasses, £15, **M&S**

FROM BOO TO YOU ...

▶ This dress is my maxi must-have. Great with pumps when you're out and about, perfect as a beach cover-up or fabulous for evening when you can wear with a belt and add a clutch. This dress covers all bases.

◀ Add instant glamour to your outfit; a pair of large sunglasses shouts style!

Ruffle skirt maxi dress, £62, **Freemans**

◀ Wear with a belt and this dress will instantly give the illusion of a stylish two-piece, making it so versatile.

Earrings, £26, **Daisy Park**

◀ Add easy style to a gorgeous maxi dress by wearing statement earrings to complete the look.

Pink high neck sleeveless dress, £65, **Oliver Bonas**

▶ A fluid dress is the easiest way to update your wardrobe. This timeless style never dates.

◀ This easy to wear dress looks so stylish and adds a pretty splash of colour to your wardrobe, making it right on trend.

Yellow tie shoulder dress, £75, **Oliver Bonas**

DROP-HEM DRESSES WORK FOR EVERY BODY SHAPE

▶ Comfort and style are possible with these gorgeous wedges. Slightly retro, but very now.

Red wedges, £95, **Vionics**



## Dottie Monaghan

There is a very definite nod to the 1970s with hairstyles this summer. I plan to go full Farrah Fawcett, but can appreciate it will not be for everyone. Put your own spin on the flick, perhaps sweeping your fringe to the side or blow-drying the sides of your hair back and a little smoother. Coloured eye shadow is also making a comeback. Eye crayons or cream textured sticks offer an easy, mess-free way to embrace this trend. Draw a fine line over the top of the lash line and finish with an upward flick, or make use of soft texture crayons and colour the eyelid area. It has never been so easy. If going for softer crayons, I would avoid over-shiny or glittery products. Paler colours have a more summery look and keep the eye area open. Lips can still have colour, but opt for softer tones as you want all the attention to be on your eyes. ■

◀ This roll up, glide-on-stick makes precision work easier and is ideal for drawing a line above the eyelashes. Lilac is a great colour for paler skin tones and those who want a subtle look.

◀ Versatile and transfer-resistant (great for us with hooded eyes), use this to define, fill and smudge. It comes with a choice of 44 colours to pick from, but Sapphire is my favourite.

◀ Think outside the box with these two fabulous new nail shades for summer. I love the idea of shadow for the evening and papaya for the day.

◀ Chubby Sticks are so easy to apply and give instant impact. The soft green works on most skin tones. Great as a complete eye shadow on the lid. Try not to go above the socket line and blend with your finger.

◀ Inspired by the RAF Harrier jets, this super-fast dual voltage hair dryer makes drying your hair a pleasure. The narrow nozzle directs the air flow to give a smooth finish and the ergonomic handle is very comfortable to hold.

Wonder Colour Long Wear Eye Cream Shadow, £22, **Beauty Pie**

Member PRICE £5.50

XL Rose Gold Ceramic Ionic Styling Brush, £18, **Routes Luxury Hair Extensions**

Caviar Stick Eye Colour, £25, **Laura Mercier**

Nail Polish in shades Shadow and Papaya, £10, **Peacci**

EH-HS99 Nanoe™ Ceramic Rose Gold Hair Straightener, £199.99, **Panasonic**

Molecule 01 Mandarin, £90, **Escentric Molecules**

Chubby Stick Shadow Tint for Eyes, £18.50, **Clinique**

Electric WT-1 Hairdryer, £99.50, **Harrier Hairdryer**

▶ With an extra-long barrel, this 53mm vented barrel brush reduces drying time, achieves maximum volume and leaves your flicks super-shiny.

▶ Sometimes it is easier to create a flick using straighteners — especially if you have shorter hair. The plates on these are longer than on most other straighteners, have five different heat settings and will leave hair with a glossy salon finish.

▶ I find this time of year is perfect for finding a new fragrance for summer and I have fallen in love with this very modern one. Imagine wafting past people in your maxi dress leaving behind the subtle smell of citrus. It will carry you away to a warm summer evening spent in a faraway place.

Eyeshadow palette, £111, **Natasha Denona**

Arabella espadrille wedge sandal, £89, **Jones Bootmaker**

Chair, £395, **Charlton Island**

Cushion, £20, **Ragged Rose**

GIVE A RETRO NOD WITH THIS '70S-INSPIRED ARMCHAIR

Pyjama set, £20, **F&F**

Candle, £29.95, **Mint May**

Shirt, £29.99, **Zara**

Leather ballerina pump, £39.99, **Pavers**

ZESTY COLOURS ADD THE WOW FACTOR

# Take it to the Tropics

EXPLORE ONE OF SUMMER'S HOTTEST FASHION AND INTERIOR TRENDS AND DISCOVER YOUR WILD SIDE.

Lamp, £98.95, **Top Drawer**

Cocktail shaker, £15, **Kitchen Craft**

WILD style

Sofa, £2,440, **Mind The Gap**

Earrings, £35, **The Joy Edit**

Cactus, £78.95, **Audenza**

Apron, £32, **Mint May**

ADD EYE-CATCHING DETAIL WITH THE HELP OF TRINKETS

Lamp, price on request, **Essential Home**

Rug, £199, **Audenza**





# PAVERS

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# “Growing old gracefully is always better”

ONCE A WILDCHILD HITMAKER IN THE '80S, **BELINDA CARLISLE**, 62, TELLS **JULIE ANN TRAINOR** HOW SHE NOW LOVES NOTHING MORE THAN HER RELAXED THAI LIFESTYLE, MINDFUL MEDITATION AND LIVES WITH NO REGRETS FROM HER NOTORIOUS PAST.

**S**he first shot to fame as the lead singer of The Go-Go's who made history as the first all-girl group to write their own songs and play their own instruments.

With hits such as *Our Lips Are Sealed* — the five-piece American rock band topped music charts all over the world and performed to sell-out stadiums.

For a twenty-something Belinda Carlisle it was a dream come true, and she reflects on those carefree days as the highlight of her career.

“I think the best years were before we got signed,” recalls the 62-year-old. “There was an incredible and vibrant new music scene during the early days in '70s Los Angeles, and the early '80s in London, and those were my fondest memories as far as The Go-Go's are concerned.”

Yet with the starry heights of fame, also came the devastating lows with the mum-of-one stating, “The worst times were probably towards the end where everybody was fighting over money, drugs and boys. All the cliches that break up any band broke up ours. I think those last days before Jane [Wiedlin] left the band were particularly painful for everybody.”

Belinda — who grew up in sunny California — became a successful solo artist once The Go-Go's went their separate ways and is famed for her household hits like *Heaven Is a Place on Earth* and *Leave a Light On*.

The singer married film producer Morgan Mason in 1986 and confessed that they both moved in together after their first date, confiding, “Of course everybody thought I was absolutely crazy, and if a friend of mine did that I'd probably think the same thing. But we both just knew, and it seemed like the most natural thing in the world for us.”

Yet, despite a whirlwind start to their romance, the golden couple have proved any doubters wrong, and are still going strong after 35 wedded years together — which is almost unheard of in Hollywood.



“Even though we're both from the entertainment industry, I don't think we've ever really been a part of Hollywood,” Belinda maintains.

Discussing the key to their lasting marriage she continues, “This year is the first time that we've actually spent every single day in life together, and I can't think of anyone else I'd rather have shared the lockdown experience with. Fortunately, we really like each other and have fun together. Like everybody this has been a tough time, and some have found it much worse than others, but I think the secret is that we've always went away to work and had a little bit of separation. However, we don't like that anymore, and we enjoy the togetherness that we have, so I think it's down to being really compatible. I'm very lucky that I met somebody that I get along so well with.”

The couple now reside in Thailand with Belinda revealing that she hasn't lived in her home country for thirty years.

“My husband and I can live anywhere we want,” she says. “Initially we decided to give France six months and we ended up staying there for twenty-five years. As for Asia, we've always had a fascination with it. In between all that we tried to go back to the States, but I'd been away for too long, and living in America just wasn't working. We had friends in Thailand, and they said, ‘Oh just come and spend some time here and you'll love it.’”

“Thailand is a fantastic country, and I feel so lucky that we’ve been able to spend lockdown here. I don’t know if we’ll be here forever but luckily I have a career where I travel to work wherever I am — we love immersing ourselves in different cultures.

“I was also in India and the UK, and I don’t regret not settling down in one place whatsoever, because I don’t think I have it in me to be in one place for a long period of time,” she explains.

Belinda reflects on her quarter of a century stint in France. “I lived in the mountains in the south of France between Cannes and St. Tropez for about 25 years, and I loved it! I feel it was a real wonderful and magical chapter in my life.”

Belinda and her husband share a son together, James Duke Mason, 29. “Having a child changes your perspective on everything. I used to take him to AA meetings with me so he would be aware of the dangers of alcoholism. We raised him in France, and as soon as he left school he went back to California, so it was time for us to move on. During my time there I became pretty good with the language,

and I even released an album in French in 2007. My grammar wasn’t great, but I did fairly well with it.”

Yet despite her charmed life and loving marriage, the star declares that it hasn’t been a bed of roses entirely, as she battled a troublesome thirty-year alcohol and drug addiction. Thankfully, Belinda has been sober since 2005, and insists that those trying times haven’t cast a shadow over her adulthood.

“I don’t really have any regrets — I had a great time,” she laughs. “I think when we’re younger we take our health for granted, and it’s only when we start to see our parents age and we lose relatives, that it made me think of mortality and taking care of myself. Now that I’m at the age I’m at — I’ve had friends get sick or even die from cancer, so I think as you get older, you realise just how precious life is.”

Fortunately, her sobriety hasn’t been tested in lockdown, and the Thai sunshine has been instrumental in maintaining Belinda’s wellbeing.

“Luckily for me where I am it hasn’t been that bad — Thailand has done a really good job. We were only in lockdown for ten weeks last spring and they’re just all over it. I’m thankful that I haven’t had the struggles that most of the world has had and even if we were in strict lockdown — we have the sunshine.

“I can’t imagine being in a cold, dark place and having to deal with that, and I feel very blessed that it hasn’t been the case here.”

Nowadays Belinda loves nothing more than getting her kicks from regular exercise. “I get up at 4am every day to start my meditation and practice yoga. It’s a daily thing and it really gives me peace of mind, especially with everything that’s going on in the world. I also do Pilates, cycle, walk and swim — I love to move.”

However, Belinda reveals that her sleeping pattern was once very different. “I used to go to bed at 8am and then get up at 6pm in my younger days when I was partying, but I’m asleep for 9pm now. My body clock has been like this for years.

“I don’t eat meat, and I’m vegan most days although on occasion I’ll have a slice of cheese. I don’t drink, I don’t smoke and I avoid meat or fish. I’m very aware of what I put into my body. I never used to take care of myself that much because of course when you’re young you think that you’re immortal, and nothing will ever happen to you, but I’ve been pretty healthy for the past 15-20 years,” she adds.

The star aims to grow old in her own way and lets slip, “I think growing old gracefully is always better, because it’s a fact of life that everybody gets older. It’s ok whichever way anyone wants to handle it, but I believe that keeping the inside healthier is more important than what the outside looks like.

“I naturally like to work out and I find yoga improves my breathing, which in turn helps the ageing process. I am determined to be as graceful as I can with it.”

“I think as you get older, you realise just how precious life is.”



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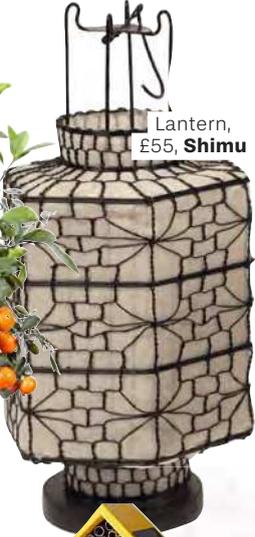
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# Tantric sex...

Would you try it?

FORGET ALL THE JOKES YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD. IF YOUR SEX LIFE HAS GONE A BIT STALE, THEN TANTRIC SEX COULD BE THE ANSWER, WRITES **BEENA NADEEM.**

For so-called Silver Splitters, divorce is nothing new. The over-sixties are the only demographic to consistently show an increase in divorce rates over the years, predating any pandemics that may have forced them into spending unbearable amounts of time together. Especially likely to split are those who have been together for thirty years or more, where the very notion of desire may spark as much interest as a January dip in the Atlantic.

Of course, over time, that once red-hot passion can fizzle into dishwater greys of mundanity. Though that doesn't seem to be the whole picture. A recent survey of 2,000 over-sixties found a quarter yearned to try something new in the bedroom with their current partner, yet only half had any sexual activity in the past year. According to sex teacher Stella Ralfini, it doesn't have to be this way.

The 73-year-old neo tantric sex teacher from Hertford urges older people to give neo tantric sex a whirl — something she says can not only rekindle emotions, but injects some fun into the stalest of sex lives too.

“Any couple who has been

together for over 30 years should try it, especially if you're not seeing eye-to-eye after spending so much time together indoors,” she smiles.

Stella, who's been teaching neo tantra in workshops and festivals throughout the UK for decades, can attest, it's saved many a doomed relationship and catapulted them to a new and exciting phase.

“Neo tantra takes us from the same old egg-and-chips sex we've grown used to with age, and gives us the champagne sex life we deserve,” she says.

And if the image of neo tantric sex conjures up images of an eight-hour sex marathon in the tradition of Sting and Trudie (actually, that didn't really happen) and rampant sex orgies, she's sorry to disappoint!

## What is neo tantric sex?

Put simply, neo tantra sex is a gentle, honest and loving pursuit that can transform the kind of sex you're having, explains Stella.

“Those in long-term relationships rarely move out of their comfort zone and this can become stale for both partners.

“Neo tantric sex can give women a chance to show — themselves first and foremost — how enticing and seductive they are while having a really good laugh at the same time. It can be done in so many ways, even



from the way we communicate to the expression in our eyes," she says.

An important point to remember is that any pressure to have intercourse is side-stepped. "Intercourse is not the ultimate goal; in fact, it's not goal-orientated at all," she says. "Instead, we shine a light on how we treat one another and ourselves through discovery, fantasy and touch. It can feel like discovering each other all over again."

## How the West got tantra so wrong

Classical tantra, which gained popularity from the fifth century, was seen as a path to enlightenment using SEX (Sacred Energy eXchange) to get there and was seen as a serious study in spiritual liberation for both men and women. In fact, neo tantra is a far stretch from its sordid Western image. The confusion arose when it was translated into English during 19th century British rule in India, when it was misinterpreted by Christian missionaries as an orgiastic 'cult of ecstasy'.

"The meaning of tantra got mixed up with the idea of orgies," says Stella. "In the Seventies it was adapted by Western people who changed the beauty of what it offers by parading around in the nude, swinging, and having orgies."

## How does it work?

"Neo tantric practitioners express themselves through playful dance, eye-gazing, erotic massage

***"NEO TANTRA TAKES US FROM THE SAME OLD EGG-AND-CHIPS SEX WE'VE GROWN USED TO WITH AGE AND GIVES US THE CHAMPAGNE SEX LIFE WE DESERVE."***

or seductive touch, and anything that makes them form a deep connection, so that includes a lot of fun. It can be done fully clothed. You would be amazed how little older couples need to get them up and dancing," laughs Stella.

If that's all sounds a little bit full on for you, she urges couples to just try out a little open, honest connection.

"Imagine eye gazing or asking each other questions that reveal things you didn't know about the other, even after years together. Or even talking about your fantasy-lovemaking scenarios.

"Fantasies form a healthy part of this and provide a boost to the libido as you put your entire trust in one another and talk about them openly; whether that's a risqué sexual tryst in the woods or a fling in a restaurant bathroom."

## Not just for couples

For many older people, the death of a partner, a split or simply not finding the right match can leave us worried about starting again. Neo tantra can, and should be, about loving yourself, too.

Stella says her workshops have been extremely popular with singles, as well as those who wish to come along and meet someone else. She recalls one woman in her sixties who partnered with a man in his thirties, whom she later went on to marry.

"It's fantastic for getting singles to share honest truths around sex and making them feel comfortable in ways they have never been taught — since this has never been part of sex education. Singles who don't know each other never kiss on the lips or touch intimately. They might end up a little tangled if they want to practise lovemaking positions, and feel a little awkward at first, but it doesn't take long bring them out of their shells and get them laughing. The whole process of exploration can even be suggestive without ever touching."

## Is it for me?

If you're left panicking at the prospect of tangling yourself up with a long-term partner, let alone a complete stranger, then don't worry. Because of Covid, Stella has moved her neo tantric offerings online through her Love Camps at [stellaralfini.co.uk/love-camp/](http://stellaralfini.co.uk/love-camp/) enabling any couples or singles to be guided in the privacy of their own house, with cameras, and microphones strictly switched off. »

### **I'LL HAVE WHAT SHE'S HAVING! THE FULLY CLOTHED ORGASM**

It often leads to orgasms, says Stella, but not the kind we might think of when the word is used in a Western context.

"There are different kinds of orgasm and it doesn't have to be linked with intercourse," she says. "It's the type you get when you eat really creamy chocolates, for example. Neo tantra is packed with these tiny, explosive reactions."

She recalls one woman coming to her popular neo tantric workshops in London's Shoreditch a few years ago, complaining of never having had an orgasm. "She experienced her first one there while fully clothed. She was so loud that she was mortified, but everybody made her feel comfortable and safe."

# “It worked for us”

“It literally saved our marriage.”

Maria Bastra first tried neo tantric workshops when she desperately wanted to change her relationship for the better. She went on to return to them again and again.

“My fiancé and I had great sex, but we couldn’t connect in other ways without one of us blowing up,” she says. The workshops taught the couple how to communicate and stay calm while understanding the importance of affection and tenderness.

“It literally saved our marriage,” says Maria.

IF YOU STILL NEED SOME CONVINCING, HERE ARE SOME WOMEN WHO SAY IT SAVED EITHER THEM, OR THEIR RELATIONSHIPS.

“Sharing your soul with a stranger brings up many hidden feelings.”

Now in her mid-sixties, Anna Maria Constastell tried out the workshops a couple of years ago after finding out her partner of many years had been cheating on her. “After that, I couldn’t see my self-worth,” she says.

Anna Maria attended on her own and says although there were a few couples, there were also six single people. “I partnered with a great guy around my age who had similar problems with his wife. What to say? Sharing your soul with a stranger brings up many hidden feelings.

We both cried a lot but by the end, we both knew we deserved more.” Anna Maria has no idea what happened to her mystery man but says the experience opened her up to having many future successful dates.

“It brought back fun and joy we’d missed through the years.”

Mary Goumas is now 66. Three years ago, she attended one of Stella’s workshops with her partner of 22 years. As the years went by, she admits, lovemaking had lost its sparkle.

“It became mechanical; something we did from memory. I was amazed by the way neo tantra transformed this.

“It brought back fun and joy we’d missed through the years and I rediscovered my partner in new, playful ways — we learned how to enhance our senses and found new, better ways of being together again.”

*“IT CAN BE DONE IN SO MANY WAYS — EVEN FROM THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE TO THE EXPRESSION IN OUR EYES.”*





**Psychosexual therapist Jo Coker** says trying something new is a great way to spice up your sex life.

**“It’s just a new way of thinking.”**

“It’s hard for the older

generation as they’re used to being very conservative and not talking about these things; just not really making a fuss, and not being very self-led.

“We spend time on our own physicality, be it swimming or walking, so why not do the same when it comes to sexual wellbeing? It’s just a new way of thinking. Exploring something new around your sexuality, as long as you’re both safe and

comfortable, is a great way to spice things up. The fact that you can do this with your clothes on, too, is great.

“We’re so used to nudity on TV and in films, but actually what you’re trying to capture is what’s erotic. That can be done just by looking into each other’s eyes, or through sexual fantasies.

“It’s hard for the older generation as they’re used to being very conservative and not talking about these things; just not really making a fuss, and not being very self-led. “We spend time on our own physicality, be it swimming or walking, so why not do the same when it comes to sexual wellbeing? It’s just a new way of thinking. Exploring something new around your sexuality, as long as you’re both safe and

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*If tantra isn’t for you, try spicing up your sex life with these.*



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**Classical tantra** started between **three to five thousand years** ago, reaching its peak in the **eleventh and twelfth centuries**. For years afterwards, it was taken out of context. **Neo tantra** adapted **in the seventies** when it was updated to appeal to Westerners.



**Sting** was quoted talking about having **‘seven-hour tantric sex sessions’ with wife Trudie**. He later explained it was a joke, adding, **‘The seven hours included movies and dinner.’**



In ancient philosophy, **tantra** focused on the **divine power of femininity** and continues to influence today’s feminist thinking.

# “I’ve always likened life to a party!”

RENOWNED PSYCHOTHERAPIST AND AUTHOR **PHILIPPA PERRY** HASN'T LET THE PANDEMIC GET HER DOWN. HERE, SHE TALKS TO **GAYLE ANDERSON** ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ART HELPING PEOPLE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES, FAMILY LIFE AND HER NEW PROJECTS.

**P**hilippa Perry doesn't hang about. Just an hour after messaging her with my interview request, I'm being welcomed into her sunny Zoom room. A pair of neon-tinted glasses fill my screen as she gets up close and personal to give me the once-over.

“Ah, look at you! It's lovely to see you again.” She grins. “Sorry for the short notice. Things are super-busy at the moment. Anyway, I've no idea why you want to interview me. I'm just me. Little old me. Just a normal person.”

“Well, as normal as the next psychotherapist, best-selling author, artist and television presenter,” I fire back.

She laughs, holding up a square of brightly-coloured needlepoint. “Hope you don't mind, but I've got this piece to finish for the Art Club exhibition. I thought it would be nice to have someone to talk to while I sewed.”

The second series of *Grayson's Art Club* once again saw the nation reach for its felt tips as Philippa and her Turner-prize winning husband, Grayson Perry, provided a pandemic pick-me-up. As with the first series, a follow-up exhibition is planned. Does Philippa think more of us have been

in touch with our creative side during lockdown?

“Absolutely. People have slowed down. They've been forced to. Art is the recognition of that slowing down process. People are saying, ‘Look, I stopped to take in the view or smell the roses — here's evidence of that’.”

The show also revealed that Philippa's no slouch in the art stakes. She first took up pottery as a mature student doing a Fine Arts degree. She's keen to point out that this was before meeting Grayson back in 1987.

“Working in the studio is something I've always done. Up until now though, I just haven't done it in public. But...” She raises a hand to her mouth and stage whispers, “I actually think I'm quite good!”

Filming was fun, although Philippa can confirm that rumours of a co-star being a nightmare on set are sadly true. Kevin, the handsome-and-he-knows-it black and white cat the couple rehomed from Battersea is, by

all accounts, a proper diva.

“Kev's a bloody pest.” Philippa sighs. “Honestly, it's a health and safety hazard having him in the work place. He chases the needle when I'm doing embroidery — it's carnage. We also have to be extra-careful about spilling lead glaze. It's super-poisonous and Kevin will literally eat anything. »

“People have slowed down. Art is the recognition of that slowing down process.”





Specialising in psychotherapy, Philippa understands the importance of being around others, especially post-lockdown.



I'd gladly lock him out." Don't his adoring fans need to see him, though?

"His adoring fans don't need to see him dead from lead poisoning though, do they?" she comedy yells back before conceding, "No, I'm joking. We do realise Kevin's loved and adored — especially by us. We just need to keep a close eye on him. It's exhausting. Lockdown's stressful enough."

What's she missing most?

"I miss breathing with people. I found that when I go for a walk with someone and we have to be six feet apart, then all we're exchanging are words. I think there's something about breathing together I've really craved."

"Mostly, I'm missing people. I started off missing friends, then acquaintances were added to that list and it's now got to the stage where I'm actually missing strangers. Before lockdown — through a combination of book events, art exhibitions or my psychotherapy work — I'd probably meet at least fifty new people every week. Life's definitely been less fun without them. That's why being asked to do *Bake Off* was such a bonus. I've made so many new best friends!"

Wasn't it an incredibly nerve-racking experience?

"It wasn't half as scary as you'd think. Everyone was really friendly and lots of fun — including Paul Hollywood and Prue Leith. I did get a little bit nervous at the technical challenge. You've absolutely no idea what that's going to be. When I found out it was a retro pudding that I pretty much used to rustle up on a weekly basis back in the day, I was ecstatic."

Was anyone super-competitive?

"Yes — me! I just can't help it, I'm afraid. I'm a demon. I'm especially competitive at games. I play a lot of online Scrabble and I *hate* losing!"

Are you competitive with Grayson?

"No, because then I might lose! I'm better than him at a few things though and one of those is most definitely cooking. I make lovely dinners for us most evenings — I love experimenting and there's usually a nice sauce involved. I'm also pretty good at belting out a bit of karaoke. That's our fitness regime at the moment — bopping around to a bit of YouTube karaoke. Have you checked out the Marsh family yet? Oh, you must!"

Philippa's main focus at the moment is working on her new book. Already a seasoned, best-selling author, does she enjoy the writing process?

"No, I bloody hate it! But my publishers have given me a generous advance with this one so I'm able to afford an assistant. That's helping a lot. She and I have weekly Zoom calls where she basically talks me down, tells me everything will be wonderful and sends me off to write another five thousand words."

What's the new book about?

"Sorry, I can't possibly tell you that. I don't want to jinx it. Writing hasn't been going as smoothly as I'd like it

to. One of the problems is that I'm so easily distracted. We have a cottage in Sussex and usually I'd just lock myself away there to write. Kevin and I would normally be sharing a blanket and a double camper seat in the garden. But we haven't been able to travel."

Perhaps we can talk about her hugely-successful current book instead, I suggest.

"You mean this one?" Quick as a flash, Philippa holds up a copy of *The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read (And Your Children Will Be Glad That You Did)*. A best-seller in hardback in 2019, it reached the top spot again in paperback earlier this year. Full of warmth and wisdom, the book's not just a guide to the do's and don'ts of parenthood — it's pretty much a guide to life.

"Intrinsically, the book's about building relationships with people. I'm immensely proud of the response I've had to it. I'm still receiving lots of



Left: Philippa and husband and on-screen partner, Grayson, are a match made in creative heaven. Above: Philippa and her talented daughter, Flo, are the best of friends.

letters and messages from people who've read it and been affected by it. It's basically advice I've learned and picked up through my years of counselling work. I'm a psychotherapist. Once you're a psychotherapist and you've trained as a psychotherapist and operated like a psychotherapist, it's not a mindset you can drop. I don't see new patients now because those relationships are like marriages, and I don't need that sort of commitment."

Does she have any advice for our post-pandemic selves? "I've actually been thinking about this a lot. We've missed contact with people so much that we might become overwhelmed very quickly. We might have lost the use of our social muscle and find ourselves becoming shy. We'll definitely need to pace ourselves a bit. How you imagine yourself to be might not be the reality. I imagine myself at a party, standing in the middle of the room saying, 'Hi everybody!' and grinning like a monkey. But I might not. I might be all shy and stick round the edges. If we were computers, we've all turned it off and now we've got to turn it on again. We're resetting."

Does Philippa's own reboot include lots of exciting new projects? "Oh, there are quite a few. All hush-hush for now though. I didn't really get going with the whole work thing until I was 50. Before that, I was a psychotherapist who worked a few hours each day. My main job at that time was bringing up Flo."

Flo is Philippa's 29-year-old author/illustrator daughter whom she is off to meet for a walk once we finish this call.

"When I was 50, Flo was 15 and needed me around a lot less. I had more time for other stuff. I wrote my first book, *Couch Fiction*, and that was like a calling card for me. It opened lots of doors.

"I'm not particularly ambitious or driven though — not at all, except by one thing and that's enjoying myself. I just want to enjoy myself as much as possible. If I don't want to do something, because it sounds dull, I just don't do it. Having the confidence to say no is key to having fun. Quite often, because I'm a talking head, I'm asked to appear on *Newsnight*. I just say, 'What time? Eleven o'clock? I don't think so.' I mean, really?! At that time of night I'm either drunk or asleep."

It's time for that walk with Flo and there could be some karaoke on the cards this evening. Things seem pretty sweet in the Perry household.

"Hell, yeah," she says. "You know, I've always likened life to a party and it's one I certainly don't want to leave yet. I might not be raving all night any more but I'm still in the chatty bit of it for sure!" ■

“If I don't want to do something, I just don't do it. Having the confidence to say no is key to having fun.”



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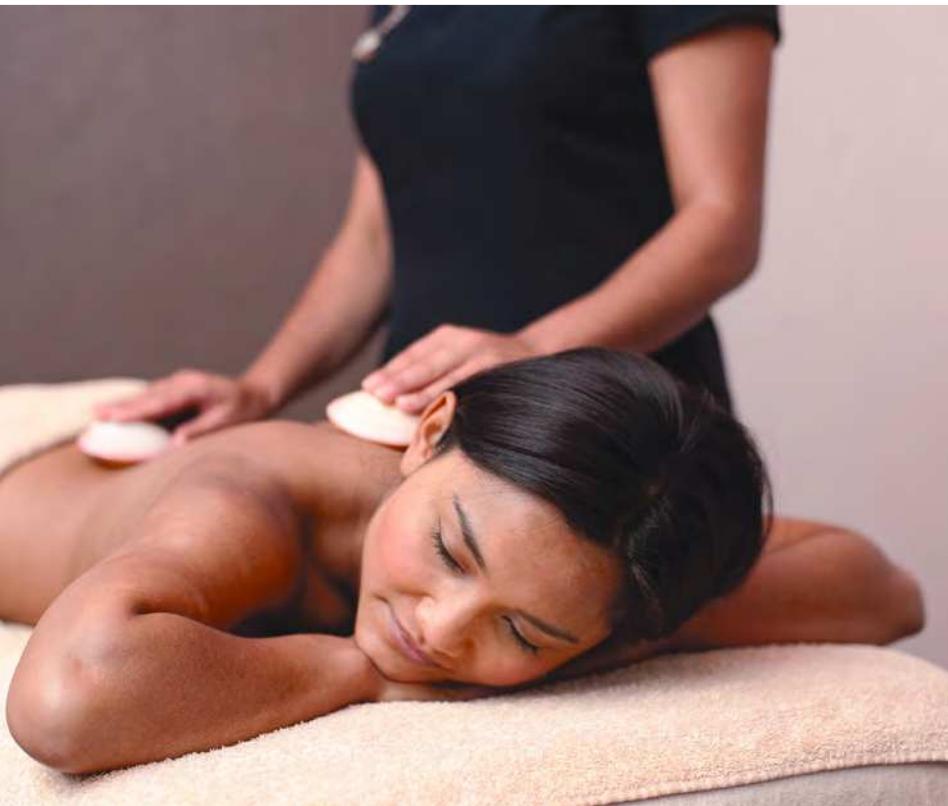
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COMPARED TO A 2,000 CALORIE DIET, ALMASED USERS ACHIEVED GREATER CALORIE EXPENDITURE AND....?

- A) GREATER FAT LOSS**
- B) REDUCED BLOOD PRESSURE**
- C) LESS WEIGHT LOSS**

In order to be in with a chance of winning the luxury spa break, please send all answers to **nutritionist@almased.co.uk**, or write to us at Almased UK Ltd, Building 3, Chiswick Park London, W4 5YA. Competition will be closed on June 16 at 5pm. Winners will be contacted by email or post.



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**ALMASED.CO.UK**

■ **Terms and conditions:** Organised by Almased. All entries will be collected by Almased and they will be responsible for selecting winners and undertaking prize fulfilment. Any entries sent in after the closing date will not be counted. The spa break voucher is valid for 24 months. The winner can choose from a large selection of spas nationwide. Exclusion dates may apply. All dates are subject to availability. Restrictions may apply and vary depending on spa location. Usual DCT Media competition rules apply. Find them at [platinum-mag.co.uk/competition-terms-conditions/](http://platinum-mag.co.uk/competition-terms-conditions/).

# TURN UP THE HEAT

WITH BENEFITS INCLUDING DETOXING, BETTER SLEEP AND REDUCTION IN BLOOD PRESSURE, INFRARED SAUNAS ARE SET TO BE THE NEXT BIG THING IN THE BEAUTY WELLNESS SPACE, WRITES **ANYA MEYEROWITZ**.

**W**hat do Jennifer Aniston, Gwyneth Paltrow and Cindy Crawford all have in common? They all swear by their infrared saunas to keep their skin glowing, their circulation healthy and their body detoxed (not to mention the post-workout benefits). In fact, the *Friends* actor once revealed in an interview with *Forbes* that she "really loves" an infrared sauna. "It just allows for such beautiful, glowing skin and cell rejuvenation and detoxification. It even helps with weight loss and relaxation."

Sweating as a means of healing has been used for centuries in cultures from South America to India. And it transpires that high-flying A-listers aren't the only ones who are reaping the mental and physical benefits of this modern day antidote.

A recent report from Credible Markets found that it isn't only celebrities jumping on the sweltering bandwagon, but more members of the general public who are now ordering their own infrared saunas and infrared sauna blankets to get that at-home wellness fix, too. This new wave of fans includes those over 55, who report it helps with arthritis and joint problems. And in fact, new research in the *Experimental & Clinical Cardiology Journal* shows that sauna bathing may be beneficial for those suffering with chronic heart failure.

Perhaps once only accessible to wellness gurus who prioritised the upkeep of a full wooden sauna, and those with enough space and money to fit one in their own home, infrared sauna blankets (starting at around £140) have made reaping the advantages of such physical therapy a viable option for many of us.

## **What is an infrared sauna?**

An infrared sauna emits a wavelength of light that heats up your core body temperature from within, vibrates water molecules and pulls deep stored toxins out of fat cells. A normal sauna heats the air around you to around 78–90 degrees Celsius and forces your body to kick-start its natural cooling process. As this happens, blood is brought closer to the surface of the skin, causing the pores to open and sweat to be released.

Lauren Berlinger, founder of cult infrared sauna brand HigherDOSE, tells *Platinum*, "Infrared saunas have become more popular lately as health, wellness and looking after ourselves has become more important.

"The infrared sauna has been around for centuries, but it was the real wellness addicts, people who had diseases they were fighting and those exposed to it from different cultures like in South Korea or Finland, that knew about infrared saunas and loved them."

## **What are the benefits of an infrared sauna?**

The myriad health benefits of the infrared sauna (including blankets) are vast, varied and, at times, sound almost too good to be true. They range from increased circulation to weight loss and increased skin radiance, and many users report a boost in mood after using one. Some report feeling soothed, others are energised.

"Those over 55 are more likely to suffer from chronic fatigue, arthritis, falls and injuries, chronic pains in the back and joints, elevated blood pressure, sleep disorders, and many other conditions," Lauren tells us. "Which is why Infrared heat therapy is so good for middle-aged and mature women, not just those in their 20s and 30s, as it can provide natural pain relief, lower blood pressure and reduce cortisol levels, as well as releasing tension and stress, allowing for better sleep and elevated mood."

Evidence suggests that when used frequently (we're talking five times a week), these sweat-inducing treatments may help with heart function. This may result from a reduction in blood pressure, as well as in oxidative stress and inflammation.

Another study, published in the journal *Age And*





Traditional saunas have provided health benefits for years, but infrared saunas offer additional wellbeing and beauty gains.

Ageing, found that those who used a sauna several times a week had a 65% lower risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease than those who only used them once a week, which the researchers thought could be due to increased blood flow to the brain. More research is needed into possible benefits.

Plus, it can burn up to 600 calories a session — for many this is a plus point and makes them worth a try.



Good enough for a supermodel. Cindy Crawford is a fan of infrared saunas and reaps the health benefits.



## Trend alert

*Have you tried these popular beauty treatments?*

### LED skin therapy

You might have seen these Hannibal Lecter-style LED masks cropping up on social media. The non-invasive LED lights work to boost lacklustre skin to add glow and vitality.

### Tweakments

From fillers to threading, 'tweakments' are taking the cosmetic enhancement industry by storm. Praised for their natural results, they're a good option for those dipping their toe in. Read our interview about tweakments on page 82.

### Lash lifts

We all know that lashes can lose a little of what we like to call 'flutter-ability' as we age, so say hello to lash lifts. Simultaneously perming and tinting the lashes leaves them curled and defined for weeks at a time, meaning you can just add on a quick slick of mascara and you're good to go. »

PLATINUM LOVES  
**3**

**THE BEST INFRARED SAUNA BLANKETS**

**How to use an infrared sauna blanket**

Unless you're planning a move to the Hollywood hills or happen to be friends with Elle Macpherson (who previously shared that an afternoon heat session of just 10 minutes helped give her immune system a boost), it's unlikely that you'll be installing an infrared sauna anytime soon — and certainly not if you've never tried one before. So, an infrared blanket is a brilliant way of dipping your toes into the benefits of this wellness trend. But how does it work?

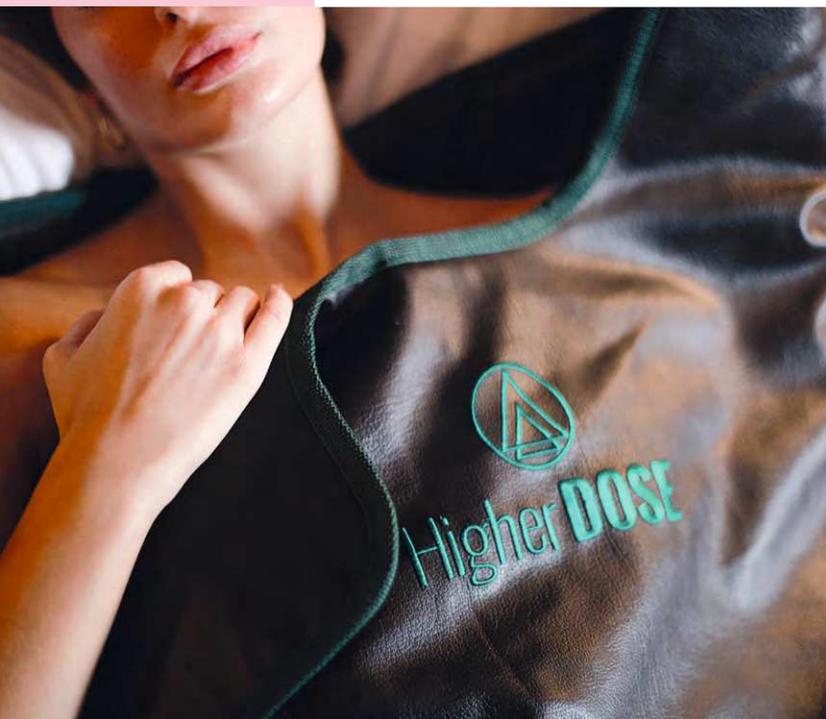
Most sauna blankets can be simply be unfurled, plugged in and then shimmied into (less vigorous techniques can be easily googled) once the time and temperature have been set on the accompanying dial.

If you're an infrared sauna (blanket, or otherwise) newbie, you can start at 15 degrees Celsius and gradually work your way up to the max (which is typically 70 degrees Celsius), though experts recommend talking to your doctor before cranking up the heat.

Begin with a 10-minute session and see how you feel, then slowly increase the session times up to a maximum of 45 minutes.

And don't be tempted to turn up the heat if you find you aren't sweating, this is normal during the first few sessions as your body adjusts.

Wear loose-fitting, but skin-covering clothing, including socks, and have a bottle of water nearby to sip on slowly afterwards. Once the sauna session is over, make sure not to get up too quickly — experts recommend waiting for your body to cool a little first.



If you're already clearing a spot in your living room to make space for an infrared sauna blanket, it pays to know which ones to look out for. We've picked out three of the best options on the market, whether you're keen to keep costs low or are ready to splash out.



**1 THE BUDGET BUY: LIFEMAX FAR INFRARED HEATED LAP BLANKET, £34.99, SUPERDRUG.COM**

If you want to ease in gently, this Lifemax blanket uses Far Infrared technology to gently relieve muscle pain and help you get a feel for what you might experience inside a full-coverage sauna blanket.



**2 THE AFFORDABLE OPTION: FIRZONE PORTABLE INFRARED SAUNA BLANKET, £239, FIRZONE.CO.UK**

A popular option for newbies, also available via Amazon, this FirZone blanket is comfortable, straightforward to set-up and easy to roll away after use.



**3 THE BLOWOUT: HIGHERDOSE INFRARED SAUNA BLANKET V3, £399, HIGHERDOSE.COM**

Crafted with the healing properties of amethyst tourmaline, which generates negative ions, and medical-grade magnetic strips, this top-of-the-line HigherDOSE blanket (New York's cult wellness brand) is easy to fasten and was designed with the help of Dr. Raleigh Duncan, who founded international sauna brand, Clearlight Saunas. ■

DIY  
blow-out



Hairdryer, £22.99, **GRUNDIG**



Hair oil, £35, **Meraki**



Travel shampoo, £5.99, **Dove**



Conditioner, £22, **Cowshed**

Shampoo, £16, **Cowshed**



Organic scalp treatment, £7.95, **HERBOWSKI**



Styling set, £18.99, **Beautify**



Sleek & straight

Straighteners, £399, **Harvey Norman**



Montalban Shampoo Bar, £8, **Lush**



Tooth comb, £1, **Primark**

# GET SALON-WORTHY HAIR

MAINTAIN THAT GORGEOUS SALON SHINE BETWEEN APPOINTMENTS WITH THE HELP OF THESE PICKS.



Silk headwrap, £39.99, **Coffee & Cloth Ltd**



Eco-friendly bathroom gift set, £40, **Helen Round**



TO ME, FROM ME



Hair loss kit, £44.99, **Australian Bodycare**

Nourishes hair



Hair mister, £89, **RÉDUIT**

# Dressing with confidence



IF YOU'VE LIVED IN JOGGERS AND JUMPERS FOR THE LAST YEAR, YOU'RE NOT ALONE. DRESSING UP AGAIN SHOULD BE A JOY — BUT IF, LIKE MANY OF US, YOU'VE LOST YOUR WAY A LITTLE, OUR STYLIST **BOO HILL** IS HERE TO GUIDE YOU BACK TO FEELING FABULOUS THROUGH FASHION.

**T**he key to looking great is to have a range of timeless, quality classics in your wardrobe

that can be styled or built upon depending on the time of year and seasonal trends.

I always try to buy the best quality key pieces I can afford and then add the 'fashion' to the outfit such as a statement colour, bold print or design from the high street. That way my outfits look stylish and contemporary and, most importantly, make me feel good — after all, that's what fashion should be about!

WEAR WHITE  
HEAD-TO-  
TOE, THEN  
LET YOUR  
JACKET DO  
THE TALKING

## French style

A jacket is a great way to elevate an outfit. Whatever the weather, the perfect jacket is an easy way of adding fashion points to an otherwise simple wardrobe. For a chic French feel, keep your jacket style simple and free of fussy ruffles, gathers and pleats. Just add a statement necklace to complete the look.



Jacket, £489, **Marc Cain**  
Top, £55, **Phase Eight**  
Jeans, £75, **Pure Collection**  
Shoes, £85, **Dune**  
Bag, £55 (for seven days hire), **Bag Butler**  
Necklace, £64.50, **QVC**

## Colour is everything

A bright splash or a whisper of pastel can always lift an outfit and your confidence. Use it to emphasise your best assets. Don't be afraid to experiment with different shades either, as you may be surprised at their effect. If you don't usually wear colour, start by adding a bright scarf, bag or belt to your outfit. The right shade can truly brighten your complexion as well as enhance your figure. The colour experts say it will lift your mood and make you feel more optimistic, too.

TEAM BLOCK COLOURS WITH PRINTS FOR EXTRA WOW POINTS



Blouse, £189, **Primrose Park**  
Top, £22, and skirt, £45, both **Kettlewell Colours**  
Shoes, £199, **Pretty Ballerinas**  
Bag, £165 (for seven days hire), **Bag Butler**



Blouse, £45, **Monsoon**  
Jeans, £89, **Hobbs**  
Shoes, £159, **Pretty Ballerinas**  
Necklace, £14.99, **T.K. Maxx** »

## Jeans and flats

The primary rule for confident dressing is to be sure that you feel comfortable in what you're wearing, although don't be afraid to experiment a little and have fun with fashion, too — this is easily done with playful accessories. The most important thing to wear when looking to dress with confidence is, of course, a smile — and remember to walk tall, too.

ROLL UP YOUR JEANS SO THAT THEY'RE BANG ON TREND



Trench coat, £189, **The White Company**  
Jacket, £160, **Kaya Turello**  
Trousers, £45, **Monsoon**  
Bag, £65, **Dune London**  
Shoes, £229, **Pretty Ballerinas**

TRENCH COATS ARE PERFECT FOR LAYERING WITH BLOUSES

## Red alert

Head-to-toe scarlet is straight from the catwalk this summer. Red could be a challenging look for some of us, but who doesn't love a challenge? There's no better time to put yourself outside your comfort zone and press the style refresh button. If stilettos aren't your thing, try kitten heels instead — a lot more comfortable and just as stylish.



TOP THE LOOK OFF WITH A SLICK OF RED LIPSTICK

Dress, £89, **Phase Eight**  
Bag, £59, and shoes, £129, both **Hobbs**

## Classic trench

A trench is a timeless, seasonless investment and it's a piece that can be worn all year round. You can wear layers under it in winter and it also protects from summer showers when the days are warmer. A high price tag doesn't always guarantee quality. Look at the finish, buttonholes and seams to judge if it's a coat that will last for seasons to come.



Jumper, £89, **The White Company**  
 Trousers, £45, **Monsoon**  
 Shoes, £35, **M&S**  
 Bag, £65, **Mabel Shepherd**  
 Bracelet, £9.99, **T.K. Maxx**

## Simple monochrome

Black has always been a firm favourite of mine, but in recent years I've found if I wear it close to my face it can drain me and look a little severe. Instead, monochrome has become my go-to. It's easy to wear and essentially doesn't take much thinking about, which is sometimes just what's needed. Mixing patterns is also fun and gives an outfit a fashionable twist.

KEEP PRINTS  
 TO ONE  
 COLOUR  
 SCHEME SO  
 IT'S NOT TOO  
 BUSY

## Purse power

Add some style details with these eye-catching clutches.



£49.99, **Mango**



£28, **Next**



£25, **Accessorize**



£26, **Next** ■

# LIFE AS A professional matchmaker

**KAREN MOONEY** HAS BEEN IN THE FASCINATING BUSINESS OF FINDING LOVE FOR OTHER PEOPLE FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS. LOUISE RAMSAY HEARS HER STORY.





## Dating dos and don'ts

- **DO:** Be open and honest — communication is the backbone to any relationship. Be clear about your wants and needs, what type of relationship you want and your plans for the future. If you're looking to be "exclusive", let your date know to avoid any relationship 'games'.
- **DON'T:** Share anything sensitive with someone you've just met online. Sharing bank details, credit card pictures or your signature is a bad idea. And remember, you're not a bank, so if your beau asks for money to bail them out, refuse. Their response could be telling.
- **DO:** Have an open mind, as you're more likely to have fun. While every match or meet may not be long-term love, it can be a story or future friend. While their shoes may not be your taste, their humour may be. So give it a go!
- **DON'T:** Compare yourself to others — be it how other generations date or how loved-up your social circle is. It's all about going at your own pace and doing what's best for you.
- **DO:** Ask questions, as it shows that you're interested in your date. While we're not saying pull out a pad like you're in an interview, asking gentle questions will have the ice thawing at the start of the date soon enough.

**E**ver thought you could be a real life cupid? Maybe Valentine's is one of your favourite days to celebrate, with flowers and cards declaring your innermost feelings. Or if single, perhaps looking at the world through rose-tinted glasses has you heart-eyed for romance. The art to finding love for others isn't as easy as shooting an arrow — but it isn't impossible. For Karen Mooney,



founder and MD of Sara Eden Introductions, it turned out to be her calling.

Karen explains, "I started professional matchmaking 33 years ago this September. I've always been entrepreneurial. I broke my shoulder in 1988, and my friends came to visit. When they were coming to see me, they were complaining how they couldn't meet the right sort of people to date. It seemed so impossible.

"I just had a moment — suddenly I thought, there must be a gap in the market. A gap for

single young professionals, as I was in my 20s at the time. And I knew if I didn't do something now, someone else would. So I handed in my notice at work. I knew nothing about the dating industry, except I had the most fantastic gut feeling.

"I was good with people and I have a business background, so why not? I started from my kitchen table and then quickly moved to offices in Windsor. We opened our London office ten years later. I'm so happy I made that leap into a new business because I love it. You never know who is going to come through the door. I once interviewed a sea captain, which is someone you don't meet every day!"

Before delving into the world of matchmaking, Karen worked at Buckingham Palace, and her links to the palace and Windsor Castle remain. Her office sits opposite the castle, while the London office is a two minute walk from the palace. She has previously worked in PR for the Prince Philip Trust Fund, but it's matchmaking that has been her one true love.

But that doesn't mean every match is a winner. As Karen says, "You can't help everyone unfortunately. Some people don't have »

**“I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE DATING INDUSTRY. I JUST HAD THE MOST FANTASTIC GUT FEELING.”:**





## “WE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OUR CLIENTS AFTER THEY FIND THEIR HAPPILY EVER AFTER.”

realistic expectations. You can't meet Prince Charming on the first try! But it's lovely to see people, who have perhaps been alone for a long time, come in to us and then they meet someone and sail off into the sunset.”

Sara Eden Introductions take love seriously. There is no artificial intelligence creating an algorithm for clients. Instead, they do things the old fashioned way, with an interview — and three forms of ID.

“The reason we don't use things like computers is because not only is it a more personal touch, but it's tried and tested. We know it works, so why change?” Karen asks. “The people who are coming to us are professional people — doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, airline pilots and even a sea captain or two! They're people who want to meet people and date properly. They're just looking for a helping hand.

“They're interviewed and vetted by us and must show us three forms of ID. If we have any doubts about someone, we don't accept them into the service. For a lot of people, who perhaps have had a bad experience online, confidentiality is important. We have some well-known personalities on our books too. The sort of people we attract wouldn't want to use the internet or swipe left or right on an app. They're looking for a more personal experience.”

Karen continues, “These measures give clients the confidence to meet people with the service. It's important to remember that finding a partner isn't black and white. By coming to us, they're sitting down and sharing what sort of partner they're looking for. We have years of experience and can help — we really want to help them. It's like chatting to a friend and we keep in touch with our clients after they find their happily ever after.”

With Sara Eden, there are different levels of membership. Karen works with a small group of clients at the Founder level of membership, where she enjoys an amazing 95% success rate. But to find out more, you have to get in touch with Sara Eden. It's all very secretive and hush hush, which adds to the romance and mystery of it all.

With the pandemic, we spent more time continuously indoors that we had before. Leading British law firm Stewarts logged a 122% increase

in enquiries for divorce between July and October, compared to the previous year. And Citizens Advice reported a spike in searches around ending relationships. It seems that the pressure and stress of the pandemic has caused issues with relationships.

“Lockdown made us think an awful lot more. People can treat life like being a hamster on a wheel,” Karen explains. “You go about your life, almost on autopilot and go to work. You do your daily chores, look or check in with your children, whatever you're doing. And then suddenly you're at home all the time.

“It's been jarring for so many people — not just because there's a change, but because for the first time in a long time, they're *really* looking at their life.

“People have been thinking of what they want in life and perhaps what type of person they want to spend their life with. For some, they have maybe been alone for a while and now are looking for a partner. For others, it may be a case of recognising your current partner isn't meeting your needs.

“It's one of the things quite a lot of people forget when it comes to dating when they're younger, or maybe they get married younger and feel the need to have someone ‘complete’ them. Later in life, those same people may go through a divorce and it's like, ‘Okay, what do I actually want?’ The children have left the home and they suddenly feel alone in their relationship.

“To look deeply into yourself, being gentle yet critical, is difficult. You shouldn't stay together with someone to simply stay together. During lockdown, our business has rocketed by 60% despite the business having to go virtual due to lockdown measures.

“It seems even with such a difficult year, there's still room for love. And isn't that lovely?”





## FINDING 'THE ONE'

### OUR TIME

Specifically catering to singles over 50, this dating site and app aims to spark meaningful conversations and long term connections. Profiles are free to create and there's even options for in-site video conversations, if you prefer face-to-face conversations over messaging.

### ELITESINGLES

Are you a working professional looking for love? Then EliteSingles could be for you. It uses a personality assessment, based on the Five Factor Theory, to help find matches. A twist to typical dating services, as instead of swiping for matches, the site delivers three to seven matches to you per day. Once matched, you can browse profiles with an easy-to-use format. Membership starts from £49.95 per month.

### SILVERSINGLES

This online dating site is specifically designed for 50+ people. Each member completes a questionnaire and the team manually verify new profiles — meaning there's less room for fake profiles! Premium membership prices start at three months for £44.95.

Pim and Lim on the happiest of days. Now the proud pair are grandparents.

## Double generation match

“When Pim was divorced, he sought my help at Sara Eden, 27 years ago,” Karen says. “It was there he met his future wife Lim, who got married in 1992. Each year, Sara Eden hosts an anniversary party, where we invite a few couples from each year.

“Pim was chatting to my manager Debbie, who’s been here for 29 years. He said, ‘You know, my son Mark is a pilot and travels all over the world. He can’t find the time to settle down, but he wants a family’.

“Debbie encouraged him

to bring his son to the party and sure enough, he did. He met a few people and then we had a lady who had been a member for a year, who just hadn’t met The One. She rejoined and we introduced them. They fell in love and had a beautiful baby girl and are waiting for measures to ease before getting married.”

Claire, Mark’s fiancée, said, “Mark and I first met for drinks at a bar in Wimbledon and started dating. We went holidaying on the sunny Greek island of Paxos, going to a beautiful restaurant with a fabulous sunset view. It was here Mark proposed to me. Our wedding was booked for May 2020, but due to the pandemic, has been rebooked for November 2021.”

Mark and Claire gorgeous baby girl Sophia was born last November. This is Sara Eden’s first double generation success story. »





## Advice from an expert



**Phil Beesley** is the owner of BARE Dating and Gutsy Dating, with over five years of industry experience. Here, he shares his expertise for those dipping their toe into the dating pool once again.

“The advice I would give to first time online daters is to take it easy! Online dating can be overwhelming as there are so many profiles to choose from. I’d say to try not to talk to many people at once. Instead, try to find a connection and some kind of meaning with someone you actually get on with.

“If you are disappointed with lack of interest, do not get discouraged right away. BARE Dating has some great tips on its website, like how to flirt online versus in person.

“But ensure you’re protecting yourself when dating. Take responsibility for your own safety and be cautious when starting out. I would recommend you do not give away your address or even a phone number. If you are unsure about the person, a gut feeling is often right! Pay attention if someone asks you too many personal questions early on, instead of just trying to get to know you better as a person.

“Some women may feel the need to change themselves to attract a partner, such as trying to be the ‘best’ version of who you think your date wants you to be. But it’s so much more interesting being with a person who is authentic or even quirky in their own way. We all know that someone being themselves is attractive — add in confidence and you’re golden.

“First impressions are important, but the opening line is not as important as a quality conversation and a genuine interest in another person. Be patient and enjoy the ride. For anyone who hasn’t dated in a while or yet to try online dating, give it a try! As long as you do not take it too seriously and have fun with it — something wonderful may come out of it.” ■

“BEING YOURSELF IS ATTRACTIVE — ADD IN CONFIDENCE AND YOU’RE GOLDEN.”

## Staying safe online

### Be secure

Don't share sensitive information online. From signatures to credit card pictures or even bank details, don't be tempted. It could be a scam.

### No scams

Be wary if a suitor refuses to do video calls or if their conversation “feels scripted”. If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.

### Going digital

Digital intimacy can be a fun way of getting to know someone when meeting up in person isn't an option, but be sure to stay comfortable and keep boundaries respectful.

# Find your perfect lipstick shade

MAKE-UP ARTIST **TRACIE GILES** GIVES **LOUISE RAMSAY** THE ULTIMATE LOWDOWN ON LIPPIE.

**L**ipstick, lippie, gloss — whatever you might call it, finding the perfect shade that works with your skintone is no easy feat. But make-up artist and lipstick addict Tracie Giles believes everyone can find the lip shade they'll fall in love with forever.

Start with the basics and think about your undertone. It's either cool, neutral or warm and discovering which tone you are is simple.

Tracie explains, "The easiest way to identify your undertone is using the veins on your wrist. If they look blue then you have a cooler skin tone, whereas if they appear green you have a warmer skin tone."

And if they look like a mix between the two? Then lucky you — you have a neutral tone and can wear almost any colour or shade you fancy.

The next step is all about finding which shades work for you. Focus on shades similar to your undertone and you can't go wrong. Tracie says, "When hunting for the perfect lipstick, cooler skintones should look for a lipstick with blue or purple undertones (not to be confused with an actual purple lipstick). For a natural, pared-back look, cooler skin tones should opt for a rosy or pink colour to complement their fairer skin and enhance the natural blush

of their lips.

"Warmer skin tones should choose a warmer shade with orange undertones. Golden, tanned skin tones suit a paler shade, whereas darker, olive-toned skins should look for something richer."

A great everyday option is chic nudes but you really need to try before you buy. Ask for testers in department stores.

And don't forget classic red — there really is a red for all of us. Just remember the skintone test and take it from there. A bright red paired with a bold outfit is a brilliant, make-a-statement look. Keep the rest of your make-up simple and let your lips do the talking.

For those with very fair skin, deep reds and scarlets with blue undertones can look striking on you, but steer clear of anything too light or yellow-toned as this can make you look washed out.

And for those with a darker complexion, great choices are darker reds, plum and deep berry shades. But this shouldn't deter you from experimenting with a statement bright lip, either.

The best lip looks are those worn with confidence — so go with what makes you feel great and you can't lose. Always apply a couple of coats for staying power and you're good to go. ■

Matte Revolution Lipstick in Pillow Talk, £25, **Charlotte Tilbury**



Le Rouge Lipstick in Avec Fourreau, £29.50, **Givenchy**



Ideal for olive skin

Pure Colour Envy Lipstick in Emotional, £27, **Estée Lauder**



Lip Colour in Indian Rose, £42, **Tom Ford**



Suits darker skintones

Matte Lipstick in Ruby Woo, £17.50, **Mac**



platinum PICKS

Cake Pop Lippie in Cinnamon, £9.50, **Beauty Bakerie**



Hot Lipstick in Hel's Bells, £25, **Charlotte Tilbury**



# Make an entrance

HALLWAYS ARE THE PERFECT PLACE TO CREATE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION. PLAY WITH COLOUR, PATTERN AND DESIGNS TO FIND A LOOK THAT MATCHES YOUR PERSONALITY AND MAKES A STATEMENT ABOUT WHO YOU ARE.

Get the  
**LOOK**

Bench, £279,  
**Danetti**

Rug, £24.99,  
**Homescapes Online**

Cushion, £35,  
**Sofology**

Sideboard, £3,310,  
**GoModernFurniture**

Lamp, £142,  
**Pooky**

Paint, £86.50 per gallon,  
**Benjamin Moore**

Cushion, £54,  
**Cielshop**

Bookshelf, £3,395,  
**Arteriors**

## COLOUR BLOCKING

Pairing block colours together is the perfect way to make for a high-impact entrance. Consider the amount of light you get and the style of your home when deciding on your colour palette. Heritage colours like burgundy, royal blue and dark green are popular right now, as are peach, rose and mustard.

Photo courtesy of Sophie Robinson

Stool, £450,  
**Sweetpea & Willow**

Side table, £155,  
**Rose & Grey**

Cabinet, £521,  
**Tom Tailor**

Clock, £25,  
**Cuckooland**

Scandi chic



Miniature bowl, £9.99, **Coffee & Cloth**

Mirror, £44, **Cult Furniture**



Poster, £12.95, **Desenio**



Coat rack, £265, **Cuckooland**



Stool, £200, **Garden Trading**

Floor lamp, £150, **Garden Trading**

Snake plant, £22, **Leaf Envy**



Sideboard, £549, **Danetti**



Vase, £35, **Garden Trading**

Laminate, from £17.99, **Direct Wood Flooring**

## MINIMALISTIC & SLEEK

Minimalism is all about paring back, so for your Scandi-inspired hallway, utilise shades of white, cream, slate grey and black for a modern and stylish look. Soften it up with added houseplants, candles, sheepskin rugs and intriguing artwork for yourself and your guests to enjoy as they make themselves at home.



Coasters, £30, **Concrete & Wax**

Shelves, £495, **Waters Baths of Ashbourne**



Candle, £24, **The French Bedroom Co. >>**

Get the **LOOK**



Rug, £249.99, **MY Furniture**



Bench, £299, **Danetti**



Chinese Money plant, £15, **Leaf Envy**



Rug, made to order at **myk-berlin.com**

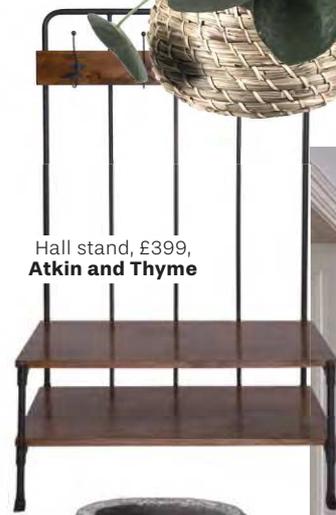


Basket, £85, **Sweetpea & Willow**



Cabinet, £1,795, **Kayu Home**

Get the **LOOK**



Hall stand, £399, **Atkin and Thyme**



Vase, £52.50, **Charles Ted**



Star, £28, **Ella James**



Rubber plant, £45, **Cox & Cox**

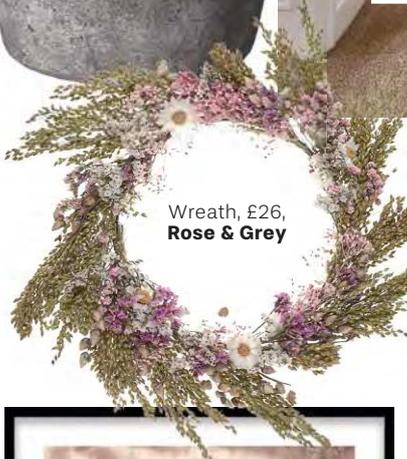


Carpet, £9.99 per m2, **Carpetright**



Flooring SS21, **Original Style**

Mirror, £56.99, **Wayfair**



Wreath, £26, **Rose & Grey**

## NATURAL TEXTURES

Bring in the joy of the outdoors with a blend of jute, woven baskets, wreaths, dried flowers and houseplants.

"A large floral wreath for the front door can create a 'wow' first impression," says Scarlett Blakey, Creative Partner of Ophelia Blake Interior Design. "We suggest looking at dried flowers to keep on-trend."



Sculpture, £79, **Artisanti**



Poster, £12.95, **Desenio**



Basket, £175, **Sweetpea & Willow**



Sideboard, £315, **Cuckooland**



Vase, £29, **Marquis & Dawe**

Simple style

A touch of colour

Vase, £40,  
**Sweetpea & Willow**

Lampshade, £35,  
**Green & Heath**

Poster, £9.95,  
**Desenio**

Floor lamp, £255,  
**Original BTC**

Hallway runner, £19.99,  
**Homescapes**

Get the  
*LOOK*

Cushion, £60,  
**OKA UK**

Mirror, £350,  
**OKA UK**

Clock, £75,  
**Hudson Home**

Wallpaper, £64.95,  
**Lime Lace**

## IMPACTFUL PATTERN

Nothing shows personality more than well chosen pattern and it's the perfect way to cover imperfect hallway walls. The most popular designs at the moment are retro florals for their ability to add charm. Team with floral arrangements and printed lampshades to tie it all together, then keep accessories simple.

Storage unit, £745,  
**Cuckooland**

Floor lamp, £395,  
**Florence Broadhurst**

Wallpaper, £99,  
**Lola Design Ltd**

Orchid, £15.99,  
**Homescapes Online**

Cushion, £35,  
**Antipodream**

Ornament, £9.99,  
**Gisela Graham London**

Armchair, £569,  
**Pepper Sq Ltd**



**PLATINUM EXPERT**  
Jasmine Birtles

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**Y**ou have probably read and heard about Bitcoin several times in the last year. It keeps coming up in the news and even in social media. It sounds weird — almost like magic money — but now big financial institutions and celebrity businesspeople like Elon Musk are investing in it.

Other cryptocurrencies to consider like Ethereum, Litecoin and Stella Lumens are also going up in price and increasing in popularity, but let's focus on Bitcoin for now.

Is it time to join the crowd and start taking Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies seriously? Let's find out if you should dip your toe in and actually buy some.

# EXPLORING the world of **Bitcoin**

BITCOIN BECAME THE WORLD'S FIRST CRYPTOCURRENCY IN 2009. A RESPONSE TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2008, IT IS A WAY TO TRADE FINANCIAL ASSETS TO BUY, SELL AND MAKE MONEY ONLINE. **JASMINE BIRTLES** TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHAT BITCOIN IS AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU.

## What is Bitcoin?

Bitcoin is one of the earliest examples of cryptocurrencies. It is currently by far the most valuable.

Back in 2009, after the financial crisis hit countries around the world, a mystery group called 'Sakatoshi Nakamoto' created an entirely different type of money system with 'tokens' called Bitcoin.

Dollars, euros and pounds are produced and ratified by central authorities like the Bank of England, Fed or European Central Bank.

With Bitcoin though, there's no central authority ratifying your transactions and producing the coins.

All transactions are done via thousands of computers around the world, which decentralises the whole process. The currency is earned by what are called 'miners' who are rewarded for making the system work with cryptocurrency.

Every Bitcoin transaction is recorded on every computer operating the blockchain (the system by which transactions are recorded). That's millions of computers — so no one can rub out or reverse a transaction.

These transactions are 'unpicked' by what are known as 'Bitcoin miners' who are global businesses or individuals with very powerful computers. They solve the puzzles (cryptography) that surround the transactions, creating block after block on the blockchain. They are rewarded with some 'satoshis' which are bits of Bitcoin.

You keep Bitcoin in a virtual 'wallet' on your computer or a special USB device, also known as a 'vault'. Or you could simply buy and store your Bitcoin on a cryptocurrency exchange like Coinbase or Bitfinex.



## Buying and selling

Starbucks and WholeFoods have been accepting Bitcoin for a while and I have come across a cosmetics company and a florist both keen to take it. Recently, someone bought a whole property in Dubai entirely with Bitcoin — madness!

In areas where the local ‘fiat’ currency (the normal currency like dollars or pounds) is not stable or trustworthy (places like Venezuela or Zimbabwe for example), Bitcoin is seen as a simple and trustworthy way to pay for things in another country.

At the moment, though, it’s unlikely that Bitcoin — or any other cryptocurrencies — will become the regular payment method of choice for most people in the West because it takes too long for transactions to take place.

As Simon Peters from the investment platform eToro says, “Because each block is added

every ten minutes, if you’re doing lots of small transactions there’s the possibility that they will not get through quickly enough. There are things happening — solutions to scale the Bitcoin network to rival the Visa network — but at the moment, it is best used for one-off, bigger purchases.”

\*Values correct at time of going to press.

### IN THE KNOW

When Bitcoin launched, 1 BTC was worth pennies, — today 1 BTC is worth approx. £40k\*, and that’s still rising.

## Understanding the language of Bitcoin

Your need-to-know terms.

### Bitcoin

A type of cryptocurrency

### Cryptocurrency

Digital currency that operates outside the control of governments and banks. Trading and investment is fast and cheap

### Crypto tokens

These are the digital representations of real money

### Blocks

The term for each crypto transaction you make; carrying out more transactions creates more blocks which builds up your blockchain

### Blockchain

The database that shows all of your activity, i.e. it keeps track of your blocks

### Mining

Mining is a method of making crypto tokens that doesn’t require you to put real money down. The aim of mining is to build your blockchain and make more out of your money when trading later on

### Satoshis

100 million satoshis make up one Bitcoin in the same way that 100 pennies would make up a pound >>





### IN THE KNOW

You can buy cryptocurrency from Bitcoin ATMs (there are around 16,000 in UK now) but these can charge quite unattractive fees.

## Are cryptocurrencies the future?

I think so. New generations are keen on it and are likely to push it forward in the near future. Interestingly, a recent report also suggested that the Baby Boomer generation will be the next demographic to start readily using currencies like Bitcoin. That generation is full of financially astute people. In some countries like the USA, buying into Bitcoin for grandchildren's futures is seen as a fun and interesting way to invest. Big financial brands are also coming on board.

Simon Peters says, "Everything over the last year has been pivotal in terms of adoptions from institutions. We've seen Tesla buy into it, also Bank of New York Mellon and Square have bought. Even Mastercard is looking to accept crypto-related payments."

Expert Gary Nuttall believes it will be a credible alternative to cash. "I'm a strong advocate of cryptocurrency," he says. "It's not covered by a central authority and there are cryptocurrencies you can use that are almost anonymous, like cash is."

In the coming era of digital-only money, cryptocurrency could save us from constant mass surveillance of our transactions.

## Investing in Bitcoin

Bitcoin is rather like gold as far as many investors are concerned. When things are volatile in the world generally, gold (and to some extent, silver) goes up in price. Bitcoin has started to be seen in the same way.

Bitcoin is priced in dollars and in February, it hit an all-time high of around \$58,000 per Bitcoin. That's not bad for a currency that originally valued itself at just a dollar. In fact, others didn't believe it was even worth that when it first came out.

Back in 2010 an IT guy named Laszlo Hanyecz bought two pizzas with Bitcoin alone — 10,000 Bitcoin to be precise. Taking this year's average prices that makes those pizzas worth around £350,000,000!

No one knows if the price will continue to go up or drop like a stone. Certainly anyone who invests in it should only put a small percentage of their money in. It could go up in price — most crypto-enthusiasts expect it to go higher than \$58,000 by the end of the year.

Remember, too, that cryptocurrencies are not regulated and are not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), so go in with your

eyes open and if you are in any doubt, avoid or take reputable advice. Your gut feeling is absolutely invaluable.

## How to buy Bitcoin

The best way to buy cryptocurrencies is through a reputable exchange. Be careful here as there are many disreputable ones. Many are advertised on social media so ignore any ads for crypto of any name or nature that you see on there.

You will need to prove your identity for the reliable sites (upload photos of your passport or driving licence and a copy of a household bill) and then it's just a question of transferring cash into the exchange and buying the currency there.

Once you have the crypto you can either leave it in your own 'hot wallet' on the exchange (actually a private key that unlocks your stash of crypto-cash) or transfer it into a separate 'cold wallet' or 'vault' that might be a 'key' on your computer or on a separate drive. ■

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## GIN BOTHY BLUEBERRY LIQUEUR

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# 8 WAYS to PERFECT eyebrows

GREAT BROWS CAN MAKE SUCH A DIFFERENCE. DOTTIE MONAGHAN SHARES EXPERT ADVICE.



**E**yebrows have become a bit of an obsession for me lately — perhaps it's down to mask wearing, meaning they have become much more

of a focal point. Eyebrows help to emphasise the eyes and the shape of the face. Not everyone was born with the perfect brow, and those who were may have over-plucked them to follow previous trends.

Just as the hair on our scalp can thin, so can our eyebrows. This can be caused by hormonal changes, emotional stress, illness, nutritional deficiencies, overzealous make-up removal — even just rubbing a little too hard with a towel. In some cases, brows can look thin when in fact the hair is merely pale or grey.

I have looked into products that help to achieve the brows you dream of. Some key advice before you get started — if they need to be shaped then get a professional to do it, at least for the first time. It can be all too easy to over-pluck or misshape them. Think of them as sisters, not twins. They don't have to mirror each other exactly. And take a tip from brow guru Shavata and use two mirrors — one magnifying and one standard size that lets you see your whole face easily.



1

## Eye Mask

£28.99, This Is Silk

A silk eye mask can soothe your skin and protect your eyebrows and eyelashes from nightly friction, which may damage hair regrowth. This mask is extra-large, made from 100% Mulberry silk and, if worn while you sleep, it can help eyebrow and eyelash serums stay put and let them do their job effectively.

I found the mask also helped me to sleep better as it blocked out light and I didn't have as many pillow marks around my eye area in the morning.



2

## Brow Tint

£10.00, Ardell

Two colours available with 12 applications and lasts up to two weeks. It's safe and easy to use, vegan-friendly, no ammonia or peroxide, yet still covers grey and fair hair beautifully. Unlike other tints this is a

powder, which is mixed with the developer. I felt this was easier. You can shake out as little as you need and reseal. It comes with a reusable tray, spool and spatula for mixing. This product may not last as long as others, but I loved the fact it doesn't seem to contain as many chemicals yet gave good results in under ten minutes. Great if you've over-tweezed.



3

## Double-Ended Brow Tool

£20, Nudestix

A double-ended brow tool to help shape and sculpt your eyebrows. It has a waterproof pencil at one end that will help fill in sparse areas and a clear gel with a spoolie at the other to set and blend, allowing for a more natural-looking finish. The great thing about this product is the large range in shades to match all hair colours. Use in short, upward strokes to mimic how hair would grow.



4

**Lash and Brow Enhancing Serum**

£55, [monatglobal.com.uk](http://monatglobal.com.uk)

Vegan, cruelty-free and clinically proven to stimulate hair growth, resulting in fuller, thicker and longer brows and eyelashes. Serums work by increasing blood flow to the hair follicles and releasing vitamins. Monat also has red clover extract, which can reduce the impact of the hormones that can help to cause hair loss. It can take six to eight weeks for eyebrows to regrow, but I noticed them a little thicker after four weeks using it morning and evening. This also has 9ml of serum whereas most others I have seen are only 6ml. I also found that if I rubbed the serum in gently after applying to my brows. It allowed for better contact and it didn't just stay on top of the brow hair.



6

**High Precision Brow Pencil**

£14, [Diego Dalla Palma at M&S](http://Diego Dalla Palma at M&S)

Rich in natural pigments with velvety texture, this glides on brows. The added brush at one end makes for easy blending and cuts out the need to carry extra brushes around. Keep the point of a pencil sharp for precision accuracy. Blend with a cotton bud then brush brows back into shape if you have sparse brows and need more coverage. No gel at hand to hold brows in place? Pears soap applied with a damp spoolie brush will dry clear and hold them in perfect shape all day. A magnifying mirror can really help see finer hairs to get that perfect finish. When choosing which shade, there is no one size fits all, but start with a shade just darker than your natural hair colour and work your way up (if you go lighter this can lose your youthful look).



5

**Brow Restoration Mask**

£29.99, [londonbrowcompany.co.uk](http://londonbrowcompany.co.uk)

Repairs hairs from the inside out, returning them to their natural glory. Leave on for ten minutes or overnight, then rinse with warm water. Ideal if you have regular tinting or you are trying to regrow or restore your eyebrows. Very easy to use, smells good and has a handy tool to apply the cream with. My eyebrow felt softer after the first use. I think this would be really beneficial if your brows are unruly or dry.



7

**Pro-Brown Dybrow**

£7.50, [Eylure](http://Eylure)

This will darken light coloured hairs and put colour into grey. Lasts up to six weeks and will take under 15 minutes to get results. You can achieve up to 12 applications and the result is beautifully defined brows that only require a little brush into place in the morning.

I found this product easy to apply and the results were good. It was surprising how many eyebrow hairs were there, but not visible until I coloured them. Make sure you remove any product that has got on to skin around brows or, in my case, my fingers, as it proved difficult to remove afterwards. Great for those of us who want to ditch gels and brow pencils.



8

**Bring Back Brow Shape**

£19, [lookfabulousforever.com](http://lookfabulousforever.com)

This will add definition to your eyebrows and works particularly well on fine or sparse brows. With the ultra-fine brush you can build or create individual brow hairs. I felt it was more natural than a pencil — it's waterproof, so if you get caught out in the rain, you won't have to worry about streaks. LFF's number six spoolie brush is great to comb eyebrows into shape before you apply the gel. ■





Ring, £45,  
**Milly Grace**

18ct gold plated  
necklace, £229,  
**Missoma**

Earrings, £195,  
**Emily Mortimer**



Earrings, £65,  
**Ana Luisa**



18ct gold vermeil  
necklace, £129,  
**Missoma**



Bracelet, £7,  
**Accessorize**

# SPARKLE ON THE SAND...

Ocean jewels



Blue topaz ring,  
£235, **Emily  
Mortimer**



Earrings, £15.99,  
**Mango**

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Bracelet,  
£45.95, **Seol + Gold**



18ct gold vermeil necklace,  
£125, **Missoma**



Precious gold

Earrings,  
£145, **Mejuri**

Pretty and playful



Earrings, £22,  
**Oliver Bonas**



Bracelet, £34,  
**Oliver Bonas**



Trinket box, £14.99, **Gisela Graham London**



9ct gold earrings, £114.95, **Seol + Gold**

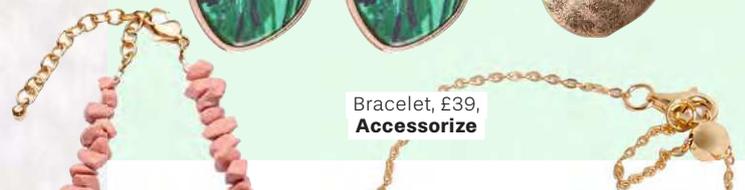


Necklace, £24, **Oliver Bonas**

Summer's hottest shade

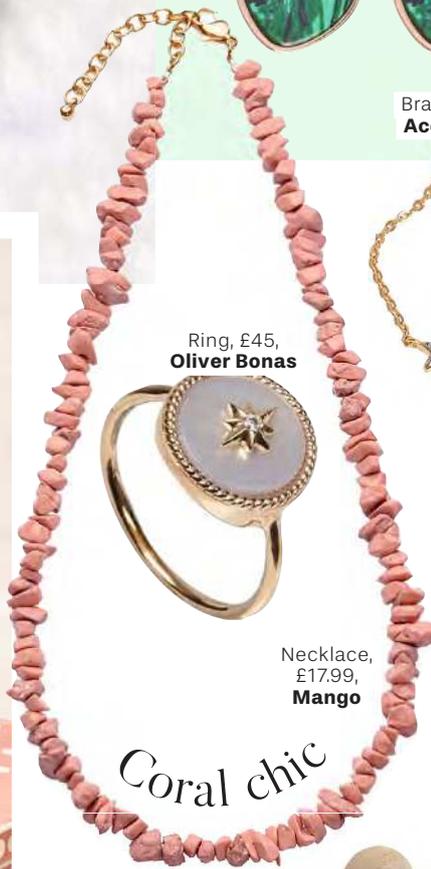


Earrings, £7, **Next**



Bracelet, £39, **Accessorize**

Wear every day



Ring, £45, **Oliver Bonas**

Necklace, £17.99, **Mango**

Coral chic



18ct gold vermeil with Aquamarine, £125, **Monica Vinader**



Jewellery stand, £22.50, **Oliver Bonas**



Ring, £148, **Wilhelmina Garcia**



Earrings, £38, **Milly Grace**



Bracelet, £11.99, **Zara**

THE  
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ISSUE

# Awaken your *senses*

FEEL LIKE YOU'VE LOST YOUR MOJO OVER THE PAST YEAR? TUNING BACK IN TO YOUR SENSES CAN HELP TO GIVE YOU BACK YOUR MOTIVATION. **CLAIRE CANTOR** INVESTIGATES.



**T**he weather is warmer and summer is almost here but are you ready to emerge with renewed energy, or will you have to be tempted out from under your snuggly blanket?

Over the past year, we have been deprived of so many things — the simplest of hugs, a touch on the shoulder, a smile from a stranger and a chat in a café. We have experienced a sensory deprivation that has affected even the most resilient of people. With these lost stimuli many of us have also lost our mojo, our direction, our creativity.

“Tuning into the senses is like a magical elixir that calms and energises us,” says best-selling author Gretchen Rubin (*The Happiness Project* and forthcoming *Book Of The Five Senses*). “The senses enliven because there is gratification, excitement and vividness to really listening, tasting and seeing, but they are also grounding and force you to live more in the moment.

“You can’t save a scent, or binge it — you can only experience what you’re smelling right now. Dialling into your senses is an easy access to wind down.”

We can start our reawakening by confounding our senses and building new neurological pathways. “When we shake things up a little, life becomes more interesting,” explains psychotherapist Billi Silverstein, who suggests the focus should not be on how big or small the challenges. Simple steps can start to alter our thinking and can encourage the process of change. “Switch round the furniture, move a chair to a different outlook, swap cupboards in the kitchen. Experiment with putting on underwear you don’t usually wear, use your non-dominant hand for an everyday activity or raise your eyeline a few centimetres on your daily walk. You will see the world from a new perspective.”

Conversely, trudging the same old daily walk can actually benefit your creative thinking. “When we do not have anything interesting on the outside, we have to create something interesting on the inside,” says Gretchen. “You can let your mind off its leash. Sometimes, to ‘do something’ we have to do a lot of nothing.”

“Tuning into the senses is like a magical elixir that really calms and energises us.”



## Sight

Our daily walks have certainly been a lifeline for many of us, but we can increase their benefit by factoring in 'awe'. According to psychotherapist Brian E. Robinson, an 'awe walk' is when we intentionally shift the focus outwards rather than inwards, and engage in the expansiveness of the world around us. This in turn distances us from our stresses and strains.

“Visual stimuli impact our behaviour and our mood,” says Charles Spence, experimental psychologist and author of *Sensehacking*. “We all know how hard it is to resist a delicious-looking piece of cake or snack. We often decide to eat, not because we are hungry, but because we are exposed to an external food-related cue. Having a bowl of fruit in the kitchen or living area will help nudge you towards making healthier food choices.”

Bringing new colours into our home and working environment can affect our mood and productivity. “Blue stimulates the imagination and fires up creativity,” says interior designer Jazz Barrett from EPR Architects. “It evokes feelings of relaxation and is associated with water, which itself can induce a peaceful, meditative state. Red, on the other hand, is energising.”

Colour psychologists explain that if you want to feel uplifted then opt for pastel colours like peach, nude and light pink, whereas green symbolises health and can help you feel refreshed.

“Shape and light are equally important if we want to change or direct our mood,” says Jazz. “Most people feel better in rooms with curved edges and rounded contours, while being able to see the outside world has restorative influences. Even house plants help improve concentration and reduce stress levels.” »

## Sound

Have you noticed sometimes life is quieter these days? Not as many planes going overhead at 6am, no shouting in noisy environments. For some, it is a welcome auditory respite from our loud world, but as a freelance writer I have missed sitting in cafés; the gentle hum of the background noise and chance of meeting someone new always seemed to get my creative juices going. Then I discovered Coffitivity, an app which brings you ambient café noise recorded in coffee shops from around the globe.

Research has shown that a moderate amount of ambient noise seems to induce creativity. "When we are engaged with other tasks like cleaning our teeth or mowing the lawn, our brain is allowed to work in a more creative way and find solutions," says the app's creator Ace Callwood. Coffitivity is definitely something I will keep using even with more freedom.

Nothing can change our mood faster than a favourite tune. Music can help you feel better, more energised, encourage sleep and decrease feelings of loneliness. Music psychology researcher Amanda Krause studies how our everyday interactions with music influence our health and wellbeing. "There are more than 500 different benefits associated with music," explains Amanda. "These wellbeing benefits can be classified as social, emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, as well as generally promoting quality of life.

"Music has always been a social activity. During the Covid crisis we saw people singing together from balconies, promoting a feeling of connection and bonding. Try listening to music with a friend — and feel how it actually impacts your mood."

One of my more unusual lockdown purchases was a Tibetan singing bowl — calming me at first 'bong'. Sound therapist Farzana @TheSoundTherapist explains how tones and frequencies can induce calm and positive emotions.

"Unlike music, sound therapy uses individual notes, tones and frequencies to create the desired impact. Higher pitches and frequencies are more stimulating, meaning they work best for increasing productivity. Slower melodies are better for increasing creativity."



## Touch

Touch, our most developed sense, has perhaps been the most starved over the past year or so. As humans we are hardwired to need and thrive on touch, and a 6–20 second hug is all it takes to release feel-good hormones that promote bonding. This sensory deprivation has also been called 'skin hunger'.

We can stimulate positive emotions of comfort by nestling under a soft blanket or wearing cosy socks. Weighted gravity blankets aim to ground and mimic an embrace, while stroking a pet or touching a natural surface or plant can be calming.

We can learn to release and let go of emotions and physical pain through self-tapping — the act of repeating positive messages while tapping parts of the body. It works by sending a subconscious signal to the brain to say it's safe. "You can use tapping whenever you feel a negative emotion rising," says tapping expert Sarah Tobin. "Tapping helps to slow the production of cortisol and adrenaline, the fight or flight response, and instead activates the parasympathetic nervous system function of rest, regeneration, repair and recovery."

“A 6-20 second hug is all it takes to release feelgood hormones.”



## Taste

Many of us are craving new flavours and taste experiences after lockdown — and that's healthy. New flavours can stimulate our emotions and different parts of the brain.

Scientists believe sweet foods even have the power to help form stronger memories. Think back to sweets you loved as a child, which can provoke powerful feelings of nostalgia. Experts also believe the taste of fruit and veg influences emotion and can actually make us happier. As we start to get more freedom, make a resolution to try new flavours every day and gauge the impact they have on your mood.



## Smell

I love smelling all the potions and lotions in a pharmacy, and have been known to stop women in the street for the name of their perfume.

But smells aren't all good. “We tend to focus on the positives, but forget to eliminate annoyances or negative experiences,” says Gretchen Rubin. “A hand lotion that we keep out of habit that is sticky, or a cleaning product with a nasty smell. Get rid of them. Equally, clear out mess under your kitchen sink, junk an itchy sweater and fix a wobbly chair. Negative sensory experiences distract us and often make us feel irritable.”

Gretchen adds that smells can be unusually helpful. “If you are trying to curb your snacking, try spraying on your favourite perfume. The idea is that if you satisfy one sense fully, you will not have to seek out a pleasure for another.” ■



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# “We take so much of life for granted”

RENOWNED FRENCH CHEF **RAYMOND BLANC** TELLS GEMMA CALVERT HOW LAST YEAR TRANSFORMED HIS GOALS AND WAY OF WORKING FOREVER.

“I’ve always got a bit of kefir or yogurt because it has some really interesting bacteria for your tummy,” says Raymond Blanc OBE. The two Michelin-starred French chef is in his west London apartment. More accurately, in his fridge, listing the food treats and staples he can’t live without.

“I’ve got butter, gin and tonic and vodka — the best vodka is called Fair; it’s French and made from quinoa. There’s watercress, parsnip, celeriac, chicory, onions, shallots and always a bit of 80% chocolate with hazelnut, that’s nice at the end of the day.”

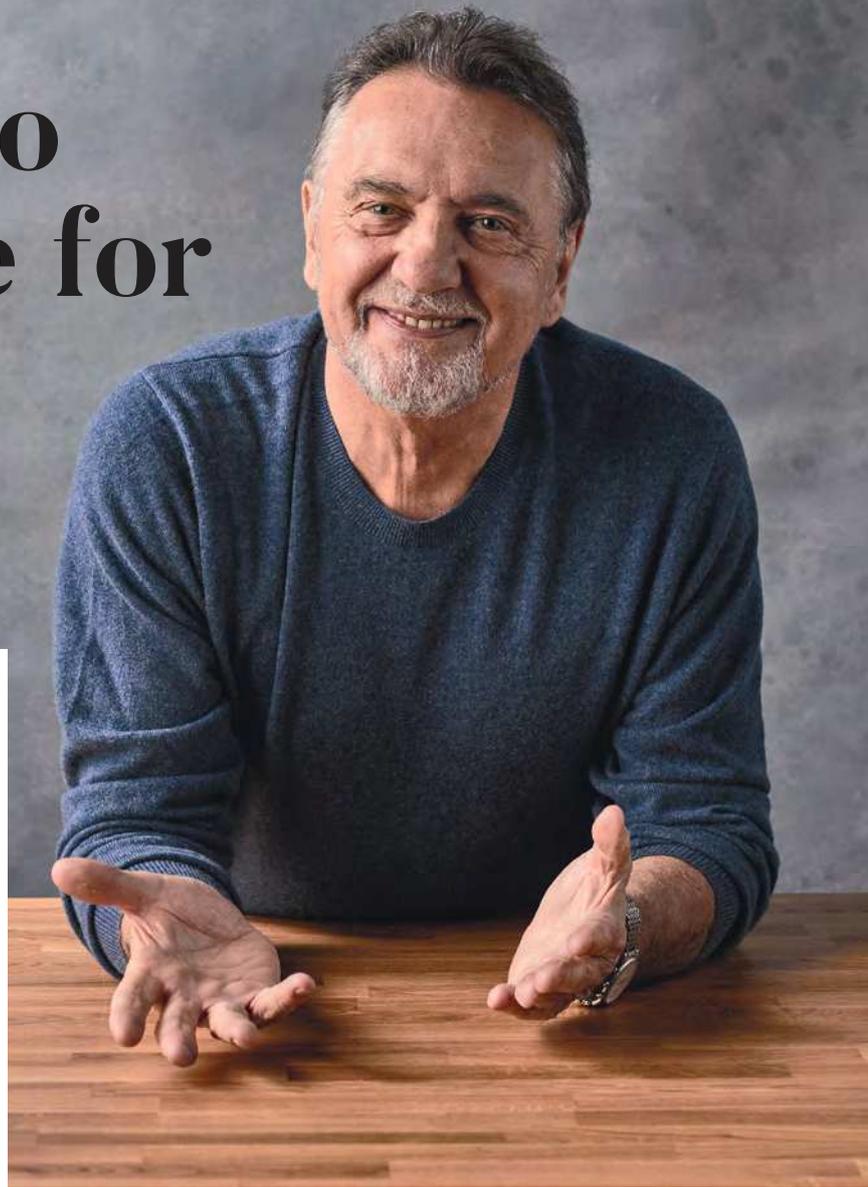
It’s an everyday, but insightful peek into the private life of the self-taught, celebrated cook, whose influence on gastronomy is so great he is the only chef to have been honoured with both an OBE from Britain and the French Légion d’honneur.

There have been other immense successes over the years. Raymond’s Oxfordshire restaurant and hotel Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons has kept him busy for 35 years, he has a franchise of Brasserie Blanc restaurants, a cookery school, has written more than ten books and presented umpteen telly shows, including his most recent on ITV, *Simply Raymond Blanc*.

But these days, Raymond, 71 — a man once familiar with clocking up 13 hour working days — is enjoying a more relaxed approach to his professional life.

“Now I only really want to take what I truly enjoy — people and businesses I love to work with to create relationships,” he says. “By taking on less, I will do it better.”

It’s an admirable commitment to self-love and balance sparked by a near-death dalliance at the end of last year. Mid December, Raymond — an asthmatic — contracted Covid-19 and spent four weeks in Oxford’s John Radcliffe Hospital where he was medicated with steroids, spent 18 hours a day wearing an oxygen-pumping CPAP mask and



lost 13kg as the virus ravaged his body. Through meditation, he says, he strengthened breathing stamina and survived. However today, on a beautifully bright morning, as he pads around his kitchen, Raymond is still audibly wheezy.

“I’m still out of breath,” he explains. “The lungs take a while to repair.”

He is still healing in other ways, too. Last year, three months into the first lockdown, Raymond endured a profound loss when his beloved 97-year-old mother Anne-Marie succumbed to coronavirus. Maman Blanc, as he refers to her with fondness, inspired his cooking from a young age and his latest book, *Simply Raymond*, a collection of his favourite home-cooked recipes, is a heartfelt tribute.

Here Raymond tells *Platinum* how he won his battle with Covid-19 and overcame food prejudice, plus his plans for a culinary tribute to his beloved late mother.

**Q: RAYMOND, YOU’VE HAD A TOUGH OLD TIME. ARE YOU WELL NOW?**

**A:** Yes, it was pretty bad. In no time I had a 40 degree fever, totally shivering, feeling ice cold then the doctor did the test and I had the virus. I was put in an ambulance to Radcliffe where they have the best coronavirus unit. I went to high dependency unit and from then on it was not very pleasant for 17 days because I never knew if I would make it or not. I could

barely breathe and my lungs were totally infected. They wanted to increase treatment, but I begged them to leave me another three days and that's when I learned to meditate. I would breathe for 18 hours a day with the mask, then suddenly my oxygen went up and the consultant started to dance in front of the bed. She wrote 'wahoo!' on the board because I was improving.

**Q: ARE YOU STILL MEDITATING?**

**A:** Very much so. Obviously now, of course, there are lots more distractions, but I want to keep this good habit. This experience, if anything, has enriched me immensely. The first thing it taught me is not to be flippant with life. We take everything for granted, like breathing. For me, breathing is a joy. I appreciate every breath that I can possibly take. When I was in hospital I could barely walk and I lost about 14kg, all my muscles were going to waste. Then you have panic attacks, anxiety attacks, cognitive problems. In my room, there was a little bit of a window that you could open and I would breathe that wintry, cool air. I've learned to respect more what we are given.

**Q: WE'RE SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT MAMAN BLANC. TAKE US BACK TO MEALTIMES WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD...**

**A:** Every Sunday, we had about 15 or 20 around the table and the women would cook their hearts out for the boys who would take their aperitifs in the dining room, having a good time. It was food like you've never seen. Every meal on a Sunday was five or six courses. Hams, crudités, which is one of my favourite dishes — grated celeriac, beetroot, sliced cucumber, tomatoes with a simple mustard dressing — and you have a dish fit for a king. With just carrot

and a bit of celeriac you can make a beautiful dish, or carrot and cucumber. It takes just 15 minutes.

**Q: YOUR NEW BOOK IS ABOUT SIMPLE COOKING. TELL US ONE OF THE MOST SIMPLE BUT IMPACTFUL WAYS TO COOK...**

**A:** From the moment you learn to pan fry steak, you can pan fry anything. You can caramelise a beautiful piece of cod, any fish, any vegetable, any meat. Pan fry in a little bit of butter — 10g, no more — so that you've browned the steak for two minutes on each side for medium rare. Don't move the steak, leave it where it is on medium heat, you can hear that lovely sizzling, add salt and pepper — of course — and then at the end you add four or five tablespoons of water to catch up all the juices. It creates the most extraordinary, five star Michelin jus.

**Q: COULD YOU BE TEMPTED TO GO VEGAN BECAUSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?**

**A:** I don't see me being a vegan. You need all sorts of different carbohydrates and protein, some of them you can take from pulses and vegetables, but many of them are found in meat. Personally, I eat at least four or five vegetarian dishes a week and if you're going to eat meat, make it the best quality. It'll cost you a bit more but you will have the best flavour.

**Q: POST-PANDEMIC, WILL THE WAY WE EAT FOOD BE ANY DIFFERENT?**

**A:** I'm not going to say that globalisation will not exist, but I believe strongly that there's going to be a rebirth of reinventing our own food, our own agriculture, rather than importing from millions of miles away.

**Q: IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DON'T LIKE TO EAT?**

**A:** When I came to England, I thought baked beans were a symbolism of fast food, but I've learned through time that baked beans are not a bad food at all. Although they're canned, most of the nutrients are still there. It's quite nice to open up a can and warm it up.

**Q: WORST CULINARY DISASTER...**

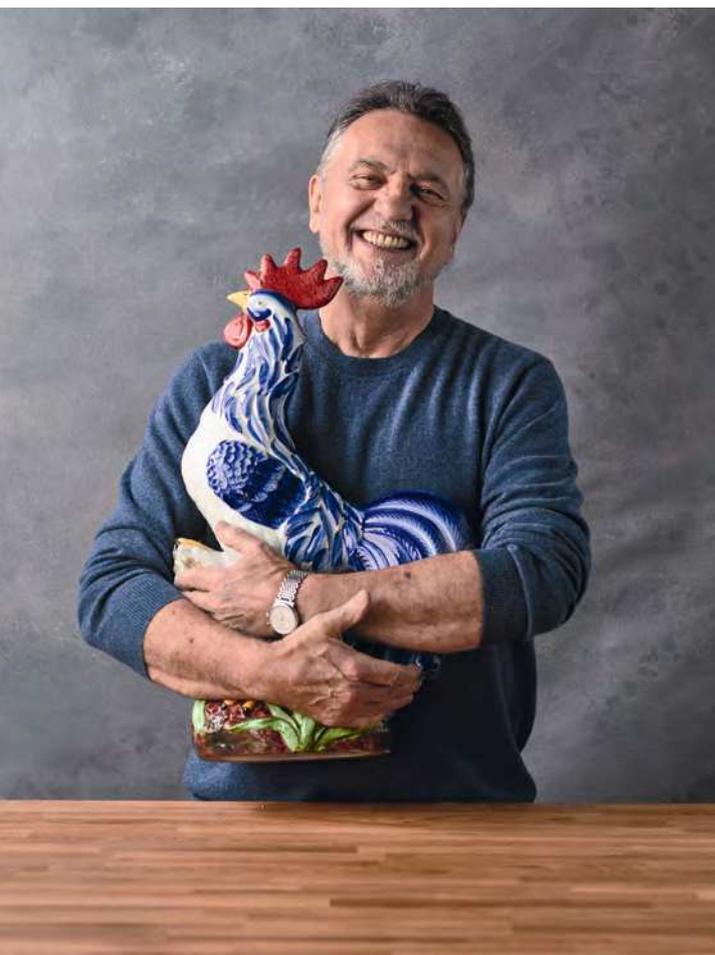
**A:** Way back in 1981, I'd just won my two-star Michelin for my little bistro, The Quatre Saisons. I was a young kid on the block, 31 years of age, and I had to cook at The Dorchester for about 50, most of them were top chefs. I finished service at 11pm, drove to London, unpacked all my flour and butter, did my own puff pastry and terrines during the night. I cooked all night and everything that could go wrong, went wrong. It was a disaster and compounded by the fact I was cooking for all these great chefs. It was so humbling! I just had to swallow my pride and try to live for another day.

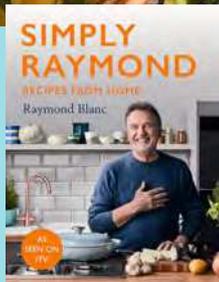
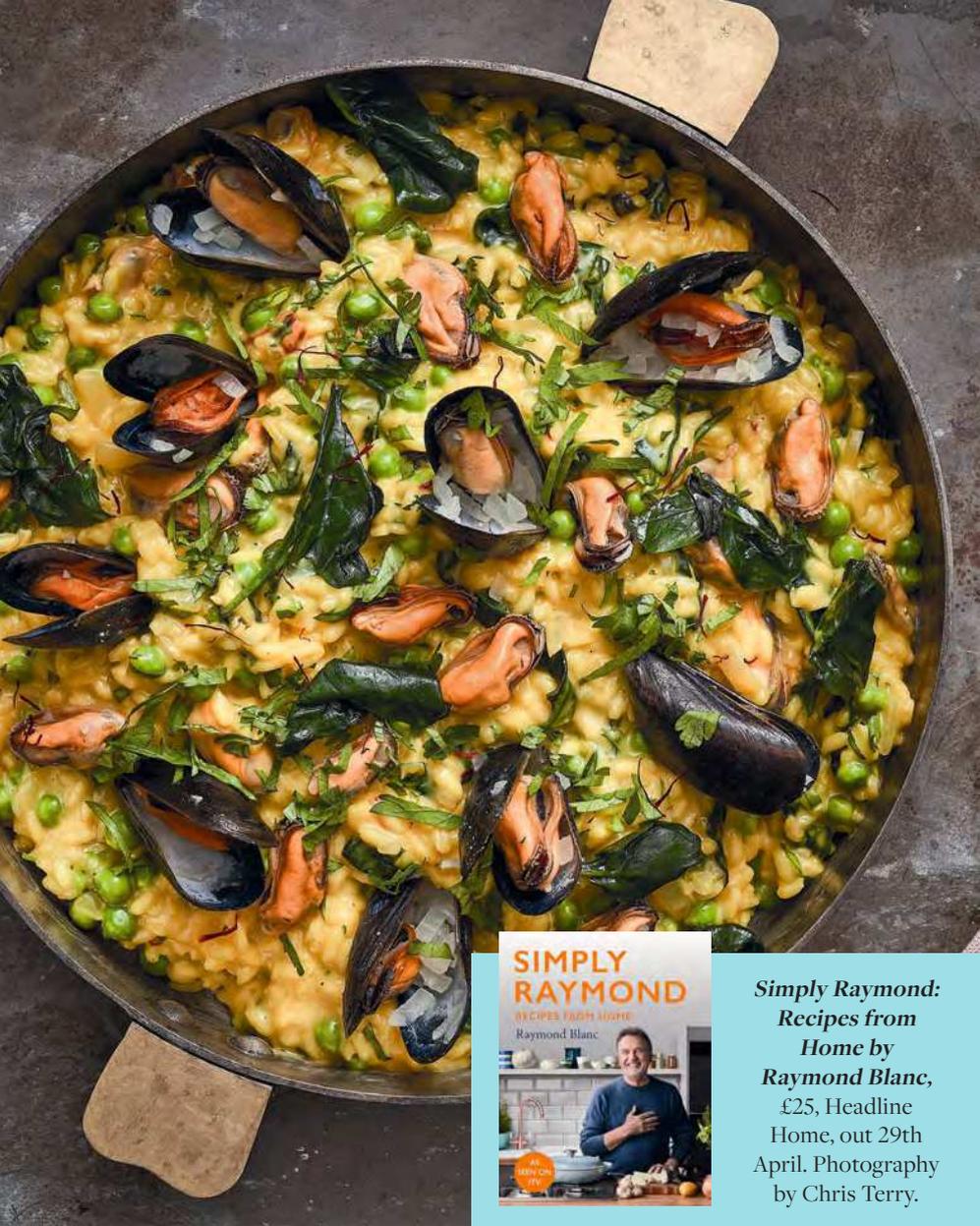
**Q: YOUR INCREDIBLE CAREER BEGAN WITH A JOB AS A CLEANER. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO THE OWNER OF THAT ESTABLISHMENT?**

**A:** They gave me a hard time there, but I wouldn't moan. I would say 'thank you for giving me the opportunity'. That's where I started and I feel proud because I became the best washer up, the best cleaner, then the best waiter, then a great chef in this country.

**Q: WHAT'S NEXT?**

**A:** Go fishing a bit more! I have a beautiful flat in Villefranche, close to Nice, so I'd like to spend some time there. That was my dream and I've got my dream. I'm a lucky man. »





*Simply Raymond: Recipes from Home* by Raymond Blanc, £25, Headline Home, out 29th April. Photography by Chris Terry.

## ▲ Mussel and saffron risotto

PREP 20 MINS / COOK 40 MINS  
Mussels and saffron are united harmoniously in this classic risotto.

SERVES 4

### For the mussels

- 1kg fresh mussels
- 1 onion
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 100ml dry white wine

### For the risotto

- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 200g carnaroli rice
- 2 bay leaves
- A couple of pinches of saffron powder
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 2 pinches of sea salt flakes
- 100ml dry white wine
- 300ml water (or fish stock)

### To finish

- 50g Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
- 2 tsp unsalted butter, at room temperature

A handful of coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley  
100g cooked peas

- First, prepare the mussels. Ensure that all the mussels are tightly closed and not damaged before you begin to cook; any mussels that are damaged or open should be discarded. Wash them in a large bowl and under cold running water. Mussels that float at this stage are not very fresh, so discard them. Remove any barnacles and beards, but don't scrub the shells as this can end up colouring the cooking juices. Drain.
- Finely chop the onion and peeled garlic and grate the cheese. In a large saucepan over a medium heat, sweat half the onion, the bay leaves and thyme in the butter for 1 minute. Increase the heat to high, add the mussels, pour in the wine, cover with a lid and cook for 3 minutes.
- Drain in a sieve over a large bowl



Saffron is often nicknamed the 'sunshine spice'. One study found that it was significantly more effective than placebos at treating symptoms of mild-to-moderate depression.

and discard any mussels that have not opened. Reserve the cooking juices, as you'll need about 200ml to make the risotto. Once the mussels have cooled, pick the mussels from their shells, leaving a few in their shells for decoration, and put them all aside.

■ Now, to the risotto... Melt the butter in a large saucepan on a medium heat. Add the remaining onion, cover with a lid and cook for 2–3 minutes, until the onion is translucent. Add the garlic and stir in the rice, then add the bay leaves, saffron and cayenne pepper and lightly season with salt. Stir and continue to cook on a medium heat for 2 minutes, until the grains of rice are shiny.

■ Pour in the wine and let it boil for 30 seconds and stir. Pour in the mussel cooking liquor and the water or fish stock and stir again. Now cook on the gentlest simmer, with just a single bubble breaking the surface. Cover with a lid and leave for 20 minutes, but it mustn't boil.

■ Now it's time for 5 minutes of some serious and fast stirring. At full speed, stir the risotto. The grains rub against each other, releasing the starch, and this gives the rice its creaminess. Yet every grain remains whole, unbroken. Taste — the rice should have a slight bite.

■ Add the cheese, butter and parsley to the risotto, along with the cooked peas and spinach, if using, all the cooked mussels and a strong squeeze of lemon. Stir, taste and correct the seasoning just before serving.



## ▲ Slow-roasted shoulder of lamb with harissa and chickpea salad

PREP 10 MINS / COOK ABOUT 4½ HOURS / MARINATE 1 HOUR  
Fragrant, filling and oh-so-delicious!

1 tbsp sea salt  
1 tbsp ground cumin  
100g rose harissa  
100ml extra-virgin olive oil  
2.5kg new season's shoulder of lamb  
300ml water

### For the chickpea salad

1 jar (230g) piquillo peppers  
2 preserved beldi lemons  
A large handful of curly or flat-leaf parsley  
2 tins (400g) chickpeas  
Sea salt and black pepper

■ Mix together the salt, cumin and harissa, and then add the extra-virgin olive oil. Place the lamb in a roasting tin. Lightly score the skin of the lamb and rub it all over with the salty harissa mixture. At this point, you can leave the lamb for an hour, allowing the harissa flavours to infuse, but this is not essential.

■ Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Roast the lamb for 20 minutes, and then reduce the temperature to 150°C/ Gas 2. Cover the lamb shoulder loosely with foil, and return it to the oven to roast for a further 2 hours. Now baste the lamb, add the water and return it to the oven for 2 hours, again loosely covered with foil.

■ While the lamb is roasting, chop the piquillo peppers, finely chop the preserved lemons (skin and pulp) and coarsely chop the parsley. Put them to one side; you will need them to finish the dish.

■ Remove the lamb from the oven. Spoon out most of the fat from the tin, leaving the roasting juices. To the warm roasting juices, add the chickpeas, peppers and lemon. Add the parsley too and season with the salt and pepper.

■ Toss together and bring to the boil on the hob. Place the lamb shoulder on a platter with the chickpea salad.

■ Bring the lamb to the table and invite your guests to help themselves. The lamb will be tender enough to fall from the bone with a spoon, though it can be carved if you prefer.

## ▼ Pear almondine

PREP 10 MINS / COOK 20 MINS

It's rare to find a dessert that is both simple and extraordinarily delicious. Pear almondine is one of my favourites.

SERVES 6

6 pear halves, tinned or jarred  
100g unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus extra for brushing  
100g caster sugar  
100g ground almonds  
1 tsp cornflour  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 medium free-range egg

### To Serve

A handful of flaked almonds (for extra flavour, first toast them in a dry pan)

Icing sugar, for dusting

■ Preheat the oven to 160°C/ Gas 3. Butter (or oil) a tart ring, about 18cm x 2cm. Cut a long strip of greaseproof paper to stick to the inside. Place the lined tart ring on a lined baking tray or baking stone.

■ Drain the pears and slice them in half again if they are large. In a large bowl, mix the softened butter and sugar. Then add ground almonds, cornflour, vanilla and egg, and mix well. Spoon the mixture into the cake tin, spreading it evenly.

■ Arrange the pear halves evenly around the outside of the tart, resting them on top of the almond sponge mixture, and with the tip of each half meeting in the middle. According to size of the pears, you may require the base of half a pear to fill a space in the centre. Scatter with almonds.

■ Bake the tart on the middle shelf of the oven, on the preheated baking stone or baking tray, for 16–20 minutes, or until golden. Leave the cake to cool for a few minutes before removing it from the ring. Before serving, dust with icing sugar. ■



THE  
**CONFIDENCE**  
ISSUE

# Tackling anxiety



MOST OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED WORRY AND STRESS OVER THE LAST YEAR. IT IS A NATURAL RESPONSE WHEN WE FEEL UNDER THREAT, AND CAN MANIFEST MANY MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS. BUT SOMETIMES THOSE FEELINGS ARE TRULY EXACERBATED. PSYCHOLOGIST **JO HEMMINGS** EXPLORES HOW TO BEST ACCEPT AND COPE WITH ANXIETY.



## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid. It is usually related to what we think might happen imminently or what we are fearful about happening in the future.

Anxiety and stress are often used interchangeably and while there are many similarities between them, they are also quite distinctly different in other ways. Both anxiety and stress are emotional responses. Stress is typically caused by an external trigger, sometimes short-term, like an argument with a loved one or a looming work deadline, or sometimes longer-term, like being unable to work, having a chronic illness or your relationship being under long-term strain.

Anxiety, on the other hand, is more like a persistent, excessive worry, caused by an internal trigger of concern about a situation that we have little control over. It can ebb and flow, depending on our personality and mood, but it is more insidious than stress. It's fuelled by the hormones adrenaline and cortisol, which had been running on high alert for so many of us during lockdown.

Under normal circumstances, most of us can self-regulate our stress hormones, but in a world of constantly changing uncertainty, it has been too challenging for many of us, and we have had to live with a variety of symptoms, which include:

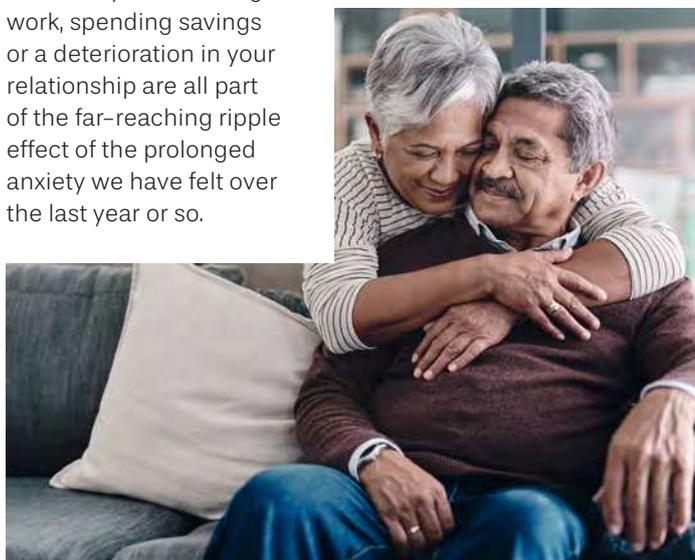
### Physiological symptoms

- ✓ Aches and pains
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Racing heart
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Muscle tension
- ✓ Upset stomach
- ✓ Insomnia
- ✓ Loss of libido

### Psychological symptoms

- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Exhaustion
- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed
- ✓ Unmotivated
- ✓ Lack of purpose
- ✓ Restlessness
- ✓ Frustration
- ✓ Racing thoughts
- ✓ Lack of perspective
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Poor memory
- ✓ Poor concentration

Even anxiety seemingly unrelated to the pandemic may in some way actually be related to it. Worry about losing work, spending savings or a deterioration in your relationship are all part of the far-reaching ripple effect of the prolonged anxiety we have felt over the last year or so.



“Heightened levels of adrenaline and cortisol can leave us in a constant state of agitation.”

## Long term anxiety

We all need some form of stress. Adrenaline, which is our fight or flight syndrome, is key to ensuring our safety. We have to make an immediate decision whether to face a situation head on, to fight it, or whether to retreat or flee from it — our flight response. It prepares our bodies and minds for an appropriate response in times of a sudden change in our situation, which may be perceived as a threat. Cortisol, our main stress hormone, has a positive role to play in helping control our blood sugar levels, regulate our metabolism, reduce inflammation and assist with memory formulation.

But when we over produce adrenaline and cortisol over a prolonged period of time, we tend to feel in a constant state of agitation. When we can control over stimulation of cortisol and adrenaline, by addressing those elements of our life that are causing it, by diminishing or eliminating them, we feel much less anxious. But when a situation is out of our control, we can feel sad, angry and stressed. We become irritable on what seems like a permanent basis and inevitably our sleep patterns are affected. We either have trouble dropping off, disturbed sleep or vivid and troubling dreams — and the exhaustion from lack of sleep simply amplifies our stress and anxiety.

More than half of all adults (60%) have reported that their anxiety got worse during the pandemic. Adults aged 55–64 reported a 20% increase in their anxiety. Common coping strategies from this prolonged anxiety have included eating more and consuming excess alcohol. While these comfort strategies might help in the short term, in the longer term putting on weight has implications on our self-esteem and confidence and has medical implications like diabetes.

Using alcohol as a coping mechanism can become addictive, damage our liver, cause weight gain and poor decisions, as well as making us ultimately feel even more anxious, as alcohol itself is a known depressant.

Whichever way you look at it, long-term anxiety isn't good for our bodies or our minds, but the positive news is that we've got this far and having done so, we have built up an enduring resilience to life, which is likely to stay with us forever. »

# THE 6 TYPES OF ANXIETY

Mild anxiety, or even prolonged anxiety can be dealt with in time. We need to learn coping mechanisms, which help us deal with the rushes of anxiety that we have and help promote the mood boosting hormones of endorphins, serotonin and oxytocin. But left unattended, there are basically six types of anxiety that can potentially develop:



## 1 Generalised Anxiety Disorder

People with GAD feel anxious and worried most of the time, not just in specific stressful situations, and these worries are intense, persistent and interfere with their normal lives. Their worries relate to several aspect of everyday life, including work, health, family and/or financial issues, rather than just one issue. Even minor things such as household chores or being late for an appointment can become the focus of anxiety, leading to uncontrollable worries and a feeling that something terrible will happen. If these feelings go on for more than six months, and you feel anxious more often than not, you may have GAD. It affects around 14% of us and is more common in women than men.



## 2 Panic attacks

People who suffer from panic attacks can feel genuinely gripped by overwhelming and uncontrollable feelings of anxiety, with a range of symptoms including shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness and excessive perspiration. Sometimes, people experiencing a panic attack think they are having a heart attack or are about to die. If a person has recurrent panic attacks or persistently fears having one for more than a month, they're said to have panic disorder. Around 5% of people will experience a panic attack in their lifetime.



## 3 Social Anxiety Disorder

People with SAD (not to be confused with Seasonal Affective Disorder) may fear being judged, criticised, laughed at or humiliated in front of others, even in the most ordinary, everyday situations. For example, the prospect of eating in front of others at a restaurant can be daunting for some people with social phobia.

Symptoms include excessive perspiration, trembling, blushing or stammering and diarrhoea. Even if you have never felt like this, a year of lockdown has caused many people to fear going out and socialising or going back into an office or an everyday interactive situation that we previously took for granted, a situation known as FOGO (Fear of Going Out).

11% of people have experienced social anxiety disorder, but this figure is expected to go up post lockdown.



## 4 Specific phobias

Many people feel anxious when faced with snakes or spiders, heights, or travelling by plane. Fear is a rational response to situations that can pose a threat to our safety. However, some people react to objects, activities or situations (the phobic stimulus) by imagining or irrationally exaggerating the danger. Their feelings of panic, fear or terror are completely out of proportion to the actual threat. Sometimes the mere thought of the phobic stimulus, or the sight of it on TV, is enough to cause a reaction. These types of excessive reactions may be indicative of a specific phobia. Symptoms involve panic and extreme distress and around 10% of the British population have specific phobias.



## 5 PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

This can happen after a person experiences a traumatic event (e.g., war, assault, accident, the Covid-19 pandemic). Symptoms can include difficulty relaxing, upsetting dreams or flashbacks of the event, and avoidance of anything related to the event. PTSD is diagnosed when a person has symptoms for at least a month.

**People with PTSD experience four main issues:**

### ■ Re-living the traumatic event

— The person relives the event through unwanted and recurring memories, often in the form of vivid images and nightmares. There may be intense emotional or physical reactions, such as sweating, heart palpitations or panic when reminded of the event.

### ■ Being overly alert or wound up

— The person experiences sleeping difficulties, irritability and lack of concentration, becoming easily startled and constantly on the lookout for signs of danger.

### ■ Avoiding reminders of the event

— The person deliberately avoids activities, places, people, thoughts or feelings associated with the event because they bring back painful memories.

### ■ Feeling emotionally numb

— The person loses interest in day-to-day activities, feels cut off and detached from friends and family, or feels emotionally flat and numb.

■ Around 12% of people will experience PTSD, a syndrome which may increase after all lockdown restrictions are eased.

Read our in-depth insight into PTSD on page 60.



Speaking out and reaching for help is the best way to break OCD habits.



## 6 OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)

People who have ongoing, unwanted and intrusive thoughts and fears may have OCD. Although the person may acknowledge these thoughts as silly, they often try to relieve their anxiety by carrying out certain behaviours or rituals. For example, a fear of germs and contamination can lead to constant washing of hands and clothes.

People with OCD often feel intense shame about their need to carry out these compulsions. These feelings of shame can exacerbate the problem and the shame, and consequent secrecy associated with OCD can lead to a delay in diagnosis and treatment. It can also result in social disability, such as children failing to attend school or adults becoming housebound. Around 3% of people suffer from OCD.

## Overcoming anxiety

**There are many things that you can do to prevent anxiety overwhelming you and help those pesky hormone stressors taking over your mood, behaviours and approach to life.**

■ Change or control your stressors where you can. Minimise, diminish or eliminate those areas of your life that are making you feel anxious. Sometimes writing these down helps you to focus. Where circumstances are beyond your control to change, learn to accept and adapt to those as best you can.

■ Building emotional strength, self-awareness and having a good social and support network are also ways of managing anxiety. Talk to a trusted friend or member of your family — sharing your concerns can really help. So, curiously enough can shouting at the top of your lungs — it is a quick release of pent-up anxiety! There are also mental health charities just a phone call or a mouse click away, who will always be pleased to give you advice.

■ Mindfulness or self-care (whether a long evening bath or indulging in a hobby or pastime or simply listening to music) should become a priority in your life. Don't feel guilty about looking after yourself and being self-indulgent — whether it's painting or watching a box set, distraction and absorption takes your mind off anxiety.

■ Exercise — even a gentle walk — combats both adrenalin and cortisol and promotes the mood boosting hormones endorphins and serotonin. Try and do this three times a week for around 30 minutes. Dancing around your kitchen is fine, swimming is great and if you're up to it, a bit of aerobic exercise is the best.

■ Light levels are important too — as the days get longer, those lighter evenings will help boost our serotonin levels.

Even when it's cloudy or gets dark early, just sitting by a window in your living room during daylight hours can help boost your mood.

■ And if you want a 'self-indulgent' way to boost your mood and keep those stressors at bay, dark chocolate, a glass of wine and laughing all release those lovely mood-boosting endorphins. If you can do all three together, then it's a winning and pleasurable solution. »



**“MY MIND FELT LIKE A RACETRACK.”**

**Debs, Huddersfield**

**“I’d suffered from mental health issues since the age of eight and was on a cocktail of medication. My children were my carers, and I felt**

**such a burden. When my mother, the only person I could rely on, passed away, I actually took an overdose.**

**“I was sent to see a psychologist and, while in the waiting room, I came across a leaflet for an art class. I decided to give it a go and from that day my life changed for the better. When I started to paint, I felt a sense of purpose and a reason for living. I’ve only ever known mental illness and my mind felt like a constant racetrack. But art allowed my brain to stop and focus on the painting to the exclusion of all else. Gradually I learnt to control my illness rather than it control me and, a year later, I was able to come off all medication and have since sold over 150 paintings.**

**“I now work in mental health to raise awareness of the importance of social interventions and I support the College of Medicine’s new manifesto, which is called Hope for the Future.”**



**Considering toxic positivity**

Do you remember those days, pre pandemic, when social media — especially Facebook and Instagram — was bursting full of positive outlook and attitude to life? Maybe you were part of that too, always presenting the bright side of life, even if you weren't really feeling that way?

Of course, now our lives have been fundamentally changed forever, maybe you miss that positive attitude, rather than the more anxious and uncertain mood that has overtaken many of us.

It might surprise you that actually, one of the few plusses of having gone through such a tumultuous year is that it has enabled us to get back in touch with our genuine emotions and be bolder about expressing our fears, worries or other negative emotions.

**Toxic positivity** — it's the concept that keeping positive the whole time, irrespective of what is actually happening in your life — can actually be quite damaging psychologically. When you deny, avoid or dismiss negative feelings, you are simply suppressing them, rather than addressing and dealing with them. The longer they remain suppressed, the bigger than can become.

**Emotions** — negative or positive — have an important role to play in our lives. They are information messengers. If we didn't feel fear, we would behave in a dangerous and reckless manner. If we didn't feel sorrow, we would lack empathy and understanding. If we really exercised toxic positivity all the of the time, we would be less approachable, less able to make meaningful relationships and generally be less relatable to others. Which ultimately may well add to another consequence of toxic positivity — loneliness.

Accepting difficult emotions and sharing them with friends, family or a professional is one of the key ways of relieving those emotions. Don't you feel a lot better once you have offloaded some of your negative emotions, by having a chat with your partner or a good friend? Someone who empathises, supports and maybe offers some practical solutions. Not someone who just tells you to 'pull yourself together' or to remain perpetually positive.

Of course, it's lovely and beneficial to our wellbeing to have a positive attitude to life as much as we can, but it's also vital to acknowledge and address some of those more negative feelings. Ultimately, they give you greater self-awareness and a more balanced, authentic and realistic approach to life in general.



## Jo's final thoughts and advice

Most people's anxiety ebbs and flows, depending on what is happening in our lives. We nearly always recover from it when our situations improve, or time passes and there is much that you can do to help yourself control your anxiety and stress.

Being anxious means that you can be pleasantly surprised when life goes well or that situations are easier than expected. Anxious people are often great planners — they have a Plan B (and often a C and D) which means that you legislate wisely for events that might go wrong. If you're helping plan your daughter or son's outdoor wedding for example, you'll be aware of what contingency plans are in place should it be raining!

Anxiety also means that you are more likely to be aware of your own health. You may go to the doctor faster than someone who worries less and dismisses everything with 'it will all be fine'. Even if your doubts are incorrect, you'll feel grateful that you were concerned enough to do something about it.

Sometimes anxiety leads us to take positive actions before

others, who are less anxious. Ensuring your car is full of petrol before setting off on a long drive or not feeling pressured into something that you feel may not be completely safe, are positive behaviours. If you can see a link between worrying and positive behaviours and outcomes, then being a worrier may be of benefit to you.

If you feel anxious about making a good impression on people and want them to like you, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, having a prosocial desire to be evaluated positively by others is a very good thing. It helps us be part of a cohesive, tolerant society. For example, if anxiety causes you to take care not to offend someone or hurt their feelings.

But if your anxiety is holding you back from doing what you would really like to do, you feel that it is having a negative impact on your life or it is getting worse, then please reach out to your GP and talk this through with them. The best thing you can do with anxiety is to talk about it, accept help and advice and learn the coping skills that will help you manage it best.



### Eustress is a good form of anxiety

It feels exciting and exhilarating. Examples of eustress include **going on a first date, riding on a rollercoaster or watching a scary movie**. All raise adrenaline, but in a fun way.

.....



Research has shown that students and athletes who experienced some anxiety actually displayed **improved performance** on tests or while participating in competitive sports.

.....



### Feeling anxious

can make us **better equipped** to deal with danger and allows us to **react faster** to emergencies.

.....



**People who have dealt with anxiety may be more empathetic and understanding to the issues that others face.**

.....



People with anxiety may also be skilled in **leadership roles**. They are more **cautious thinkers, careful decision-makers and great problem-solvers.** ■

# Buying a summer glasshouse



BRING SOME EXTRA BEAUTY AND ELEGANCE TO YOUR GARDEN BY CONSIDERING THE INCLUSION OF A NEW STRUCTURE IN YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE, CREATING ROOM FOR AN ABSORBING HOBBY AND A PLACE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL.

Historic glasshouse and greenhouse manufacturer Hartley Botanic experienced a renewed demand during lockdown from homeowners looking to enhance their garden spaces with beautiful, handmade greenhouses. The Lancashire-based business, which has been operating since 1938, experienced a 35% increase in customers citing ‘growing their own’ as the primary reason they wanted to invest in a glasshouse or greenhouse.

Growing your own fruit and veg, creating mesmerising flower displays, recognising the benefits of being self-sufficient and experimenting with seedlings-to-plant projects are the many ways in which you could benefit from a wonderful garden addition. Gaining another living space to unwind is a plus, too, but it doesn’t come without effort, consideration and expense. The experts at Hartley Botanic can help you figure out the best options for your space, points to consider and the must-know details when it comes to making your final decision.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GLASSHOUSE AND A CONSERVATORY?**

The main observation to note is that greenhouses and glasshouses are primarily made, and used, for horticultural reasons — for growing edibles and raising seedlings. Greenhouses and glasshouses are single glazed and not habitable structures. If you’re looking for somewhere to relax and unwind, then conservatories and orangeries are double glazed rooms, typically an extension to the home.

**H**ot days and warmer, balmy evenings always entice us to spend more time outside. That’s even more so if we have our own, personal outdoor space.

Extra time to relax, coupled with the desire to live more sustainably and a wish to get back to nature, mean that there has never been a better time than now to consider adding a beautiful ‘extra’ to your back garden.

Greenhouses — also known as glasshouses — conservatories and orangeries all have their place; your hardest decision is deciding which is best for you and how you wish to make use of it.



A small haven of tranquillity, your glasshouse should complement your existing garden aesthetics.

  
 The ideal temperature for most plants to flourish is somewhere between 80 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Even the toughest of plants and veg will struggle above this level.

However, some imaginative gardeners are now using their greenhouses in a more multi-faceted way, introducing relaxation, dining and lifestyle elements.

**WHAT SIZE AND TYPE OF GLASSHOUSE SHOULD I BUY?**

How would you like to use and enjoy your glasshouse? This is a useful consideration in deciding on a design and final size. There are many ways a greenhouse can bring your gardening potential alive, and also expand the way you utilise your garden as an outdoor space.

Perhaps you want your greenhouse to fulfil a dual purpose, to be a very practical area for growing your own food but also, an alfresco room where you can sit among your plants. For this, a structure which allows for a generous seating area with a view of key staging areas could be a consideration. Perhaps you want to grow fresh flowers for cutting, and are interested in blurring the divide between your living rooms and your garden — consider an abutting greenhouse accessible from within your home. Consider, too, if you're likely to move house at any point in the future.

**WHAT IS THE OPTIMAL POSITION IN MY GARDEN FOR A GLASSHOUSE?**

Your glasshouse needs access to as much sunlight as possible during all seasons of the year, so positioning is an important consideration. Avoid locating your greenhouse in the shadow of tall trees, boundary fences or walls as these will obstruct light.

For lean-to greenhouses placed against a wall, a south-facing position is ideal. For stand-alone structures, the ridge along the top of the greenhouse should »



This abutting Paxton greenhouse takes shabby chic to a whole new level.

“Your greenhouse needs to find a natural space within your existing garden, rather than dominate it.”



A Victorian abutting greenhouse can provide a contemporary feel, especially if the dwarf wall mirrors that of the property.

ADDING AN ORANGERY CAN INCREASE YOUR HOME VALUE BY UP TO 5%. A GLASSHOUSE WON'T MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO HOUSE PRICE.

ideally run from east to west. This will allow the sun to run along its longest side during the day. Other considerations include a location to catch prevailing winds for ventilation purposes and choosing a site which is not too exposed to the cold.

Site your greenhouse in close proximity to an electricity source (if you will be using this) and a water supply. Pick a plot on fertile soil if you want to install growing beds.

It is also important to consider how the structure will fit aesthetically into your landscaping as a whole. Your greenhouse needs to find a natural place within your existing garden, rather than dominate it.

#### **WILL I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?**

Planning consent isn't always needed for greenhouses or glasshouses which are intended solely for domestic use. However, there are many and varied circumstances where planning permission will be required, such as for Grade 1, 2 or listed properties or for areas of outstanding natural beauty. You may also need permission if the greenhouse will be disproportionately large in relation to your existing property. With so much variation at stake, we recommend you check this with your local planning authority. A good place to start is the government's planning permission portal for England and Wales [gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales](http://gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales)

#### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A 'LEAN-TO' AND AN ABUTTING GREENHOUSE? AND HOW DO THEY DIFFER?**

Lean-to and abutting greenhouses can provide clever, neat and stylish design solutions, which make effective use of smaller outdoor spaces or give direct access to your greenhouse through your property.

Lean-to greenhouses are placed along south-facing or well-lit walls and work well in both walled gardens and against a property's external wall. They are ideal for compact garden

areas. With their roof pitch highest next to the adjoining wall, lean-to designs provide ideal spaces to grow fruit trees and ornamentals which benefit from being trained, such as pelargonium and bougainvillea.

Abutting greenhouses are attached to a building. Attaching a greenhouse to the side of your property can create beautiful architectural interest and a contemporary look. This is especially true if you select stone or brick for the greenhouse's dwarf wall which mirrors the material of the property itself.

#### **WHAT WATER ACCESS WILL I NEED?**

Watering is arguably the most important daily task in the routine of owning a greenhouse, so easy access to a mains water supply is beneficial. There are automatic watering systems available for greenhouse owners, but for domestic structures, these are not always necessary and lack the intuition and personal touch of a gardener, able to tailor watering according to the needs of each plant.

Greenhouse owners should consider making use of sustainable water sources, using water butts to collect rainwater and 'grey' water recycled from baths or sinks. This will save on the amount of water you need to use without negatively affecting your plants.

Do not use grey water that may include bleach, caustic materials or artificially softened water

“Attaching a greenhouse to the side of your property can create beautiful architectural interest.”

## CHECKLIST

- ✔ Ample space for your requirements
- ✔ Realistic expectations
- ✔ Consider your planning permissions
- ✔ Complement your existing aesthetic surroundings
- ✔ Remember a water and electricity source

(as is found in dishwashers and washing machines.)

## IS AN ELECTRICITY SUPPLY ESSENTIAL?

Running an electricity supply directly to your greenhouse is not a must, but it can certainly make your life easier and your greenhouse more efficient.

Both heat and light are wonder ingredients for flourishing plants, and will allow further growing in all seasons and at all times of day or night. Light can improve visibility and encourage

growth. Fan heaters are also very efficient at circulating heat, even in medium and large structures.

For heating extremely large structures, electricity isn't necessarily required — a hot water pipe system with a boiler powered by gas or oil is the norm. Thermostats for this system should be located at plant height near the centre of the greenhouse, where it won't be affected by draughts or sidewall cooling, and protected from direct contact with



Growing your own fruit and veg and reducing your carbon footprint can start with your very own greenhouse.

All Hartley Botanic's Glasshouses and Greenhouses are handmade, bespoke and made to order. Customers interested in purchasing a Hartley Botanic Greenhouse should visit [hartley-botanic.co.uk](http://hartley-botanic.co.uk) for more information.



## PLATINUM'S GARDENING EXPERT, MARK LANE, RECOMMENDS

“To extend the growing season there is nothing

better than having a greenhouse or glasshouse. Seeds and young plants can be grown on until the last signs of frost. Always ensure that the glass is kept clean and clear for maximum light, so that your plants can photosynthesise and grow well. There are many different types and with the right positioning, they can become a magnificent focal point in a garden. Where possible, always use paving slabs for a pathway. This can be sprayed with water during the growing season to keep up humidity and help prevent red spider mite and other pests and diseases. Always ensure that the structure itself is on a firm, stable base and remember to have electricity and water supply added to help with lighting, heat mats, fans and more.”

.....

**The world's largest greenhouse — the Eden Project — is located in Cornwall. It's fabulous!**

.....

If you have a **conservatory** and choose not to heat it, you can use this for a **makeshift greenhouse to protect plants** throughout cold months, or cooler evenings.

.....

**A conservatory is a glass structure with a brick base and a pitched glazed roof. An orangery is a brick structure with large windows and a flat roof, with a glass lantern. ■**

# SCENTS OF SUMMER



1

A hit of honeysuckle and bergamot



2



3



4

FLORAL AND CITRUS, THIS IS SO UPLIFTING AND FRESH



5



6

Notes of juniper and cedar



7



8

SCENT OF THE OCEAN

DITCH HEAVY, MUSKY PERFUMES AND MOVE INTO LIGHT, BREEZY SCENTS THAT FEEL LIKE A SUMMER HOLIDAY IN A BOTTLE.

- 1. Acqua Di Parma Mandorlo di Sicilia, £124, **Space NK**
- 2. Aerin Mediterranean Honeysuckle Eau de Parfum, £92, **Net-a-Porter**
- 3. Elie Saab Le Parfum, £64.99, **perfumedirect.com**
- 4. Maison Crivelli Fleur Diamantine, £75, **johnlewis.com**
- 5. Guerlain Mon Guerlain Sparkling Bouquet, £79, **The Perfume Shop**
- 6. Diptyque Orpheon EDP, £125, **diptyqueparis.com**
- 7. Marc Jacobs Daisy Spring, £60, **The Perfume Shop**
- 8. Tom Ford Costa Azzurra, £36, **The Perfume Shop** ■

# “I’ve no intention of retiring!”

**Bonnie Tyler** is a true ‘80s legend. **Julie Ann Trainor** talks to the queen of the power ballad to discuss life in Portugal, conquering her biggest fear after 69 years and feeling decades younger than she is.



She’s the husky-voiced singer who became a household name with hits such as *Total Eclipse Of The Heart* and *It’s A Heartache*.

Bonnie Tyler is set to turn 70 this June, and the Welsh star reveals she feels worlds away from her pending milestone.

“When people say that to me I feel like they’re talking about somebody else, and it’s not me,” she teases. “I don’t feel that age — I feel like I’m more in my early forties.”

Born Gaynor Hopkins in the village of Skewen, near Neath in south Wales, Bonnie’s most famous hits came in the 1980s, including *Holding Out For A Hero*, which featured on the *Footloose* soundtrack.

She also represented the UK at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2013 and came 19th with *Believe In Me*, and if that’s not enough she has just released her 18th studio album, aptly named *The Best Is Yet To Come*.

Showing no sign of slowing down, Bonnie tells us, “I’ve no intention of retiring! Just look at the wonderful Sir Tom Jones — he’s got 10 years on me. His voice is awesome, and he’s still doing it.”

Moreover, she credits her career for keeping her young at heart. “I think it’s the music — I can’t imagine my life without it. These days you don’t make records to make money because everybody is streaming, but I’m passionate about making new records because it keeps my live shows fresh and exciting.” »

“70? I don’t feel that age - I feel like I’m more in my early 40s!”

**Right:** Bonnie has had many proud moments in her life, but none as rewarding as her 48-year loving marriage to husband, Robert Sullivan



What's more, the star's personal life has been just as rewarding. She has relished her 48-year marriage to Robert Sullivan (71). The duo married when Bonnie was only 22, and she insists that her significant other was actually the famous one when they tied the knot.

"We were married before I had any success. Robert competed in the Olympic Games in 1972, and his picture was always in the paper. So he is very much his own successful self. I was already married before I had my first hit record at 26, and we had our own house which he had built, so we were pretty much settled."

The couple have been residing in Portugal since last March, with the songstress joking that there are worse places to be stranded.

"We were very fortunate that Robert and I booked flights just before the lockdown to spend a week's vacation in our house in the Algarve. That was at the start of March last year and we've been here ever since. Although the fact is even if I had been at home in Wales, I wouldn't have been able to see my family anyway.

"Luckily, I always speak to my family on the phone and thank God everyone is safe and healthy. I've got two brothers, three sisters, 16 nieces and nephews, and 14 great-nieces and nephews, and one on the way. You should see my Christmas list!"

Reflecting, Bonnie knows the importance of having her husband by her side. "Robert and

I have enjoyed this time together, and I know a lot of people have suffered terrible bereavements, so we're very thankful that we have each other."

In addition, Bonnie has used her time in lockdown to overcome one of her lifelong fears.

"I finally learned to swim and it only took me 69 years!" she says. "My friend Sue — who is a very good swimmer — taught me. Before lockdown she was giving me some tips and finally it locked into place and clicked with me. I have an infinity pool, and I was swimming nearly all summer.

"At the moment, the weather is getting better, so it won't be long until we're back in the pool again.

"I can do about 40 widths, and it's good exercise as well. I'm not in the shallow end, but I don't go right down to the deep end, either — kind of three-quarters of the way down the pool."

Bonnie's fear of deep water isn't irrational — it stems from a horrific accident when she was a young girl.

"When I was nine I nearly drowned. My cousin pulled me out of the water by the long plaits of my hair, so it wasn't very nice. My mother tried to teach me and took me to the swimming baths, but I never had the confidence — but now I can. I won't be winning any competitions, but it's never too late to learn."

Prior to lockdown Bonnie was pleasantly surprised to discover that she has an unlikely admirer in the form of Mariah Carey.

The two singers' worlds collided on a flight from New York when Bonnie found herself sitting alongside the five-time Grammy Award winner.

"I've always been told that she is a bit of a diva, but she was really nice and asked me to come and join her. We drank champagne together and I couldn't believe it

when she said, ‘Oh Bonnie — you were one of my idols.’ She sat next to me for over an hour chatting and had an entourage of people with her.

“She asked me where my crew was, but I told her, ‘It’s just me, my husband and my manager.’ Mariah couldn’t understand why I didn’t have an entourage, but I said, ‘I’m not like that. I do everything myself including my hair and my make-up.’”

Another supporter of Bonnie’s is her long-time friend Sir Cliff Richard — who also has a home in Portugal. They were introduced on the showbiz circuit in the seventies, and they’ve remained friends ever since.

“I met him the first time I did *Top Of The Pops* in 1976, and typically when he’s in Portugal we see a lot of each other. We tend to meet every couple of weeks, because he only lives twenty minutes away from me.

“We’ll go out for dinner or lunch, and he loves his chicken peri peri, so we usually go to our favourite Indian restaurant which is just up the road from my house.”

Sadly, Sir Cliff had to put his latest milestone celebrations on hold. Bonnie explains, “I was supposed to sing *Happy Birthday* to him at London’s Royal Albert Hall for his 80th birthday last year, but in the end he was only able to see certain people in his bubble.

“So his sisters and their husbands went along [to his birthday meal] and the show didn’t go ahead.”

But Bonnie is keen to stress her life is not always about hanging with the A-list. “I’m not a big celeb mixer, and my friends are in normal jobs. Plus my family are my friends as well, and I have a lot of visitors here in Portugal when I’m not working.”

Strangely perhaps, another thing she’s been missing lately is the hustle and bustle of airports.

“You would be surprised at the amount we normally trudge through. I can’t believe I’m saying this, but I actually miss the exercise of walking miles through them.”

These days she has swapped the runway for sand

“I try to do 10,000 steps a day and always keep an eye on how active I am.”

and sea. “I go for walks on the beach, but during the last three weeks they’ve even closed those off.

“I try to do 10,000 steps a day, but I’m currently only doing 6,000 roughly, and that’s just around the house. I do keep an eye on how active I am and monitor it on my phone. I’ve got to stay fit for when I go on tour next... bring it on!” she roars.

**Bonnie’s new album *The Best Is Yet To Come* is out now. ■**

Bonnie has no plans to slow down yet, with her new album on the way and live shows to plan and rehearse for.



# CONFIDENT

and *carefree*

FROM NEW BUSINESSES TO OVERCOMING ADVERSITY, YOU ARE AN INCREDIBLE GROUP OF WOMEN! SOME OF OUR **PLATINUM AMBASSADORS** SHARE THEIR INSPIRING STORIES ABOUT HOW LIFE EXPERIENCES HAVE HELPED TO GROW THEIR CONFIDENCE.

## MARILYN, 68

"While travelling in Alaska in our ancient campervan in 2018, I suffered a stroke. This came completely out of the blue and was a shock as I was 66, fit and active. The amazing hospital staff in Anchorage soon discovered that the stroke had been caused by a congenital hole in the heart, which I had no idea about. I've since had surgery to repair the heart and have made a full recovery. I feel very fortunate.

"Once I'd had surgery I decided to write my autobiography as there was so much I wanted to record for the family (whether they wanted it or not!). Having had such a close call, I now live life to the full, enjoying and appreciating every minute. It has certainly increased my confidence because I realise that life is for living and that I should think of myself and my needs. When I was younger, like many others, I had very little confidence but usually managed to disguise this. My only wish is that I had realised earlier how confident I should have been!"



## CAROL

"In 2013 I went, alone, to Nepal to teach English in a Buddhist monastery. I arrived in Kathmandu, not speaking the language, trusting that the person from the volunteer organisation would be there to meet me. She was! I had to make friends and live among the other volunteers from all over the world, as well as teach the young trainee monks, known as 'monklets'.

"It was a wonderful experience and my confidence grew as I realised I'd gone a long way from home on my own, and not only survived, but had been changed forever. It showed me travel, and taking chances, are always worth it. You never know how it could end up, so go for it!"

## JUDITH, 61

"Obtaining my Bachelor of Arts with The Open University at the age of 50 was the biggest ever boost to my confidence.

When I was younger, moving schools left me with little academic confidence. From being in the top three on most subjects, I then found myself in the bottom half of the class. I left school at 16 and was told that my career prospects would be poor.

"After getting divorced in 1992, I suddenly realised I had to make my own way in the world. So I started studying in 1993 with the Open University. I became confident enough to travel to summer schools on my own. I met new and interesting people. I wrote essays that seemed well received. And I started to question everything.

"After graduating, I got my dream job with a large animal welfare charity. I have never stopped having curiosity and trying new things and I attribute this to my six years of study. Learning is a lifelong study and I couldn't recommend it more."





**JULIETTE, 51**

"It's funny how the things that bring you joy give you confidence. I have always been sociable, but shy. In January 2021, I got a text message from the local GP surgery looking for volunteers to help set up and

man the local Covid vaccination centre to support the GPs and vaccinators. I thought hard before applying as I lacked confidence but decided it was my chance to help make positive changes and contribute to the vaccine programme.

"It was the most uplifting experience, as the majority of people that arrived were so grateful to receive the vaccination. That first week we were seeing elderly patients, with one gentleman of 96 who grabbed my hand and kissed it (thank goodness for sanitiser!), as he was so grateful for someone to talk him through the process, especially as he had not left his house for over nine months.

"I have been helping out two to three times a week when the centre is open. Each shift is varied and we are placed in different roles. I love greeting people at the door and allaying any worries or talking through the process with those that are anxious. It's funny how often my brightly coloured hair makes people assume that I am loud and outspoken, when actually it's just a mask that helps boost my confidence."



**RUTH**

"In July 2017, I awoke to an extremely harsh pain on my right side that got progressively worse through the day. The following day, my husband made me an appointment with the doctor and from that moment on, everything was a whirlwind of tests and scans. My ovary had decided to have a party, and between July and September, I had a cyst that grew to the size of a 36-week gestation baby and weighed 7.5 kg. Just a week before I went into hospital I was made redundant and then, while still recovering (my cyst and ovaries were removed, and I had a full hysterectomy too), my dad died. I helped my mum to arrange the funeral. The service was led by a celebrant and I wrote and delivered the eulogy.

"Having met the celebrant I drove home and out of the blue, had this feeling that becoming a funeral celebrant was right for me. I just suddenly felt this confidence that I had never had before. I researched it and had the full support of my family and, in April 2018, I completed a level three diploma in funeral celebrancy. I loved every single second of the course. If you had told me five years ago that's what I would end up doing, I wouldn't have believed you!"



**TINA, 58**

"While in the middle of breast cancer treatment, which lasted two years, I started my handbag rental business, bagbutler.co.uk, and have had the pleasure of loaning to Platinum stylist Boo. I think chemo breaks you down in a way that is very hard to describe. You go to dark and serious places and feel stripped of femininity, or at least I did. Handbags felt like a fun antidote to all that. A bit of frippery in an otherwise truly testing world. They aren't going to make anyone better, but there is nothing wrong with a bit of fun!

"Once I had made the decision I didn't question it, as the other thing that cancer does is inform you of how short life might be. I didn't do any research. I just jumped and am growing my wings along the way.

"The treatment took away my confidence in my appearance, but somehow gave me a 'what the hell' attitude to other things, and thus BagButler was launched. The idea of handbag rental just came to me. I didn't know at that time that fashion rental was even a thing. I thought that by offering them for rental I could make them accessible to people unwilling or unable to make a huge investment in, for example, a Chanel bag. Fashion is joyful and I wanted to get that back.

"While my confidence is yet to fully come back, my business has definitely helped me. I think going 'back to normal' is a gradual process, but I have been very lucky. It's a new chapter and I'm actually excited for it." ■

# “I danced my way to happiness”

From contemporary and Latin to Scottish country and ballroom, numerous global studies show that dancing can be hugely beneficial for the overall health of women over 50. Here, eight of our readers tell us how dancing helps them feel joyful, confident and beautiful every day — even if they have two left feet.

WHO DOESN'T LOVE A DANCE FOR A MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH BOOSTER? WE FIND OUT WHAT ENTICES YOU TO STRUT YOUR STUFF.



**Corinne Tuddenham-Finn, 58**

I started dancing when I was seven after falling down the stairs and developing osteomyelitis. I was in hospital for six weeks and told I may never walk again. My doctors suggested dancing, so I stepped onto the dance floor and have never looked back!

My kids started dancing after my first husband died of cancer, too. I knew how rehabilitating dance had been for me physically, but it worked just as effectively for their mental health after they lost their father.

One thing is for sure, I'll never stop — no matter how old I get.



**Margaret Burns, 65**

I do Scottish country dancing in a women-only group. It always makes me feel jiggly and happy.

I go for the sheer joy of movement and being with like-minded people. Following patterns and steps is great exercise for my brain. Dancing fills my body and soul with joy!



**Anne Untisz, 57**

I started four years ago and am a lover of jive and rock and roll. I dance mostly in the kitchen at the moment, or in the garden and even a couple of times at the allotment!

Dance has without a doubt helped my overall health. It makes me smile and can lift my mood instantly. If my partner or I are feeling down, it just takes the right music and we are boogieing. Before we know it, we're laughing.



**Marilyn Longden, 68**

I have always loved dancing. My grandmother was a music and movement teacher so encouraged me to start. I was a go-go dancer with my boyfriend's touring band in Wales when I was 17 — it's funny to think back to those days.

It really improved my health in mind and body, even now. Dancing is uplifting; using energy to exercise my joints and muscles makes me feel great.





### Amanda Edward, 53

Unfortunately the kind of dancing I do is bad dancing! I absolutely love music and love to dance — I just have two left feet.

When my husband and I were getting married in 1990, we went to dance classes to train for our first dance, though it was not what we were expecting. The women stood in the middle of a circle while the men danced around us. I'll be honest, my husband and I were asked to leave the class because I was so off-beat and kept kicking all the partners.

I think music is really good for mental health and dancing even more so. Partner dancing gives you physical contact and a sense of belonging.



### Soo Piercy, 63

I love to do Zumba. Before lockdown I did it at least twice a week, and now do it on Zoom either with our teacher, or via YouTube. I started Zumba in 2010, mainly to try and help with weight loss, which it did — but I also toned up, too. As far as health benefits are concerned, the music is always loud and exhilarating, the moves that are put together are easy enough to follow and you soon get used to the different routines. Watching a group of ladies of all shapes, sizes and ages strutting their stuff to Shakira is an amazing experience and it's one I hope to enjoy for many years to come.



### Louisa Jarad, 48

I adore dancing and (sadly for anyone watching!), really let go on the dancefloor. I was recently asked what I've missed most in the pandemic and dancing came instantly to mind — second only to hugging. I don't do any structured dancing any more, but when I was young I did disco to UK championship standards, also salsa and ballroom. I love the freedom of dance and the buzz it gives me. I met my husband on the dancefloor back when I was at university, so there are many happy memories. Dancing always makes me happy and is such a great way to lose weight; you don't feel you are working out at all.



### Dee Desgranges, 61

I've been doing 'On Broadway' classes for three years. We learn a new musical theatre style every month, channelling our inner showgirl! I think of dancing as 'mindfulness to music' so I am really looking forward to getting back in the studio — there are only so many times I can trip over the fireplace or frighten the window cleaner!

Learning to dance is both physical and mental exercise, and seeing couples — many of whom are much older than ourselves — trip lightly across the dance floor is testament to the health and wellbeing benefits.

## Getting started

*Feeling inspired? Dip your toe in with these online groups.*

### Dancio @mydancio

Dance classes can become a ritual and a pleasure. With Dancio, you have access to expert sessions in ballet and contemporary dance. Join as a beginner and progress to advanced if you love it. [dancio.com/explore-by-level](https://dancio.com/explore-by-level)

### Sage Dance Company @sagedancecompany

A ballet company for women over 55, classes aren't just about developing dance skills, they're about building social circles, too. Simon Rice is director and former soloist with the Royal Ballet. Apply at [sagedancecompany.com](https://sagedancecompany.com)

### The Place London @theplacelondon

The Place welcomes all shapes, ages and abilities — there's no limit to the joy you feel when moving your body to a beat. HQ is based in London at 17 Duke's Road WCH1 9PY. Don't live in London? Online classes at [theplace.org.uk/participation](https://theplace.org.uk/participation)

### Mindbody @mindbody

Follow for expert guidebooks and live classes with quick tips for your at-home workouts. Yoga, Pilates and HIIT also available. Mindbody: Fitness, Salon & Spa app at [apps.apple.com](https://apps.apple.com) ■

# MOORE'S month

OUR EVER-ENTERTAINING COLUMNIST JANE MOORE DISCUSSES THE TRIALS AND TREPIDATIONS OF SOCIALISING POST LOCKDOWN AND DODGY PHONE SCAMMERS.



## PLATINUM EXPERT Jane Moore

Jane is a journalist and TV personality who makes us think while giving us a laugh, too. Follow Jane on Instagram at @janepmoore for daily style inspiration and behind-the-scenes funnies.

Shoichi Yokoi was the Japanese soldier who spent 28 years hiding in the jungles of Guam because he didn't know the Second World War was over. When he was eventually discovered by two fishermen in 1972, they struggled to convince him that life had returned to normal. I'm feeling much the same way about the end of lockdown.

As I write, we've been told that June 21 heralds the return to life as we once knew it. Consequently, on June 28, one of my dearest friends is holding a full bells and whistles 60th birthday party — with a marquee, live band, dance-floor... and a lot of people.

'Hoorah' was my immediate response upon receiving the invitation, followed swiftly by an acute feeling of trepidation. Why?

Firstly, there's the practicalities.

Having spent the majority of the past year in slippers, my feet have gone feral and all attempts to wedge them in to anything resembling a heel has resulted in a scene not dissimilar to that of Cinderella's sisters trying on the glass slipper.

Meanwhile, my fondness for a pandemic-au-chocolat has necessitated the need for an elasticated waist at all times, so my posh frocks will be staying in the wardrobe for now.

There's another reason for my feelings of uncertainty; I have forgotten how to socialise at big events where — God forbid — I will have to

attempt small talk with strangers.

Since the stricter lockdown measures started to vaperise, I have eased myself back in with a few walks with local friends. But the thought of returning to my hectic, pre-pandemic diary packed with book launches, charity events and concerts fills me with dread. And it seems I'm not alone.

According to a survey by the relationship charity Relate, 45 per cent of Brits say they loved not having to worry about social plans during lockdown, and 40 per cent say they felt anxious at the thought of socialising again.

When the first lockdown happened so abruptly last year, I vividly remember sitting down with my diary and putting a line through all my upcoming commitments. Some were cancelled with a pang of regret but there were also a lot of work-related functions I was relieved to see the back of.

It's a fact of life that we often say yes to social engagements because we feel obliged to and not because we actually want to go.

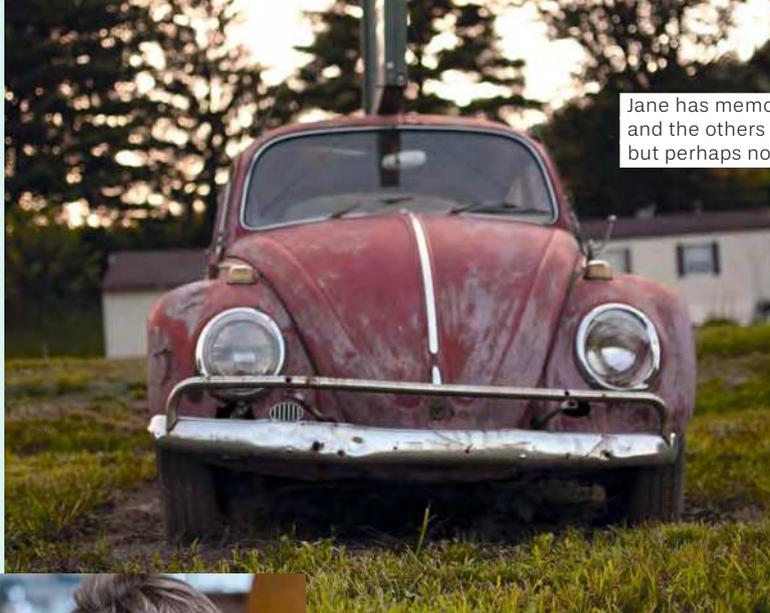
But, just like Shoichi, we must emerge blinking in to the daylight of a society that's slowly returning to normal. However, perhaps we can create a new 'normal' for ourselves? This means learning to say no to a night out if you don't fancy going. Good friends will understand.

This time, though, I will squeeze my feet in to a pair of nice shoes and join the merry, vaccinated throng at my friend's 60th.

If it's anything like her 50th, I may even be the last to leave.



Post-lockdown socialising has us all experiencing some feelings of worry and anxiety.



Jane has memories of her first ever car, and the others that followed, but perhaps not all were fond ones!

## Car-tastrophe

The other day, I was telling my daughters about the time the aerial snapped off on my first ever car — a Morris Minor, as you ask — and I replaced it with a wire coat hanger.

Their eyes glazed over (as they often do when mum saunters off down memory lane) so I'm hoping that some of you will know what I'm on about.

As a kid, I remember our Volkswagen Beetle had 'trafficators' (indicators that flipped out from the side) and a large rectangular hole where the cassette player had been before it was nicked. Then there was the 'choke' ("don't flood the engine" was a popular refrain of my mother while teaching me to drive), leather seats that burned your legs in the summer and were freezing in winter, and seatbelts were either non-existent or (in the days before inertia) strangled you.

Ah, cars aren't what they used to be. But on reflection, that's probably a good thing. ■



## Phoney scammers

Phone and email scams have risen alarmingly in the past year.

In one week, I received at least five unsolicited phone calls from 'Visa' to say there had been an unauthorised spend of £600 on my card and if I could just go through the details with them, they'd sort it out. "Oh yeah? What's the card number?" I say. There follow a silence because, of course, they don't know, then a click as they hang up. But what worries me is that more vulnerable souls, like my less tech-savvy mother, might be taken in by this dangerous nonsense through a mixture of panic and old-school politeness. Who are these charlatans and how do they sleep at night?

.....

## Life hack

With summer on the way (cue crossed fingers emoji) we 'women of a certain age' may find ourselves overheating more than usual.

If so, I recommend buying the hand fan that has effortlessly propelled me through many a hot flush.

There are plenty on the market, but mine is the EasyAcc and costs around £14. It has three speed settings and can also stand alone on your desk.

If you want to be cool in every sense of the word, you could opt for the ones that hang around your neck like headphones.



## Barking mad

Research conducted by Battersea Dogs and Cats Home suggests that 31 per cent of new pet owners bought on a whim during the pandemic. Consequently, many puppies purchased during the first lockdown are already popping up at rehoming centres because their impulsive buyers say they're 'too busy' to look after them. For which read: they don't look cute any more, require time and effort to train, and we just can't be bothered. It's also predicted that the number of dogs abandoned as strays over the next five years could increase by around 27 per cent.

Taking an unwanted pet to places like BDCH for proper care is one thing; but dumping them on the streets alone is another. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all owners would abide by the microchipping law set in 2016 that ensures every new puppy must be microchipped? If so, the owner can be traced and questioned.

In the meantime, perhaps a rehash of the famous slogan is now called for? A puppy is for life, not just for lockdown.

# Treat yourself to a luxurious handbag

WE'VE TEAMED UP WITH LUXURY BRITISH HANDBAG BRAND, SIENNA JONES, TO OFFER YOU A FABULOUS HALF PRICE DEAL ON THIS STUNNING HANDBAG THAT COMES IN A CHOICE OF SIZES AND COLOURS.

**D**esigned in Covent Garden, the Marina Bow Bag is an elegant statement piece. The shape is reminiscent of Princess Marina's style during the 1950s — a modern classic with its oversized bow detail. Opt to carry it in-hand or by the detachable shoulder strap.

Measuring 31cm x 25cm x 12cm, fully lined with an internal pouch pocket, zip fastening along top and presented in a dust bag.

The perky Mini Bow is perfect for life on the go. Smaller than the Marina Bow at 19.5cm x 13.5cm x 7.5cm, the 'Mini' still makes a statement. It comes with both a leather and a chain strap, making it ideal for day-to-night accessorising.

## THE MINI MARINA BOW BAG RAVEN BLACK

CODE: SJ09 RRP £249 OUR PRICE £124.50



## THE MINI MARINA BOW BAG MARINA BLUE

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CODE: SJ08 RRP £399  
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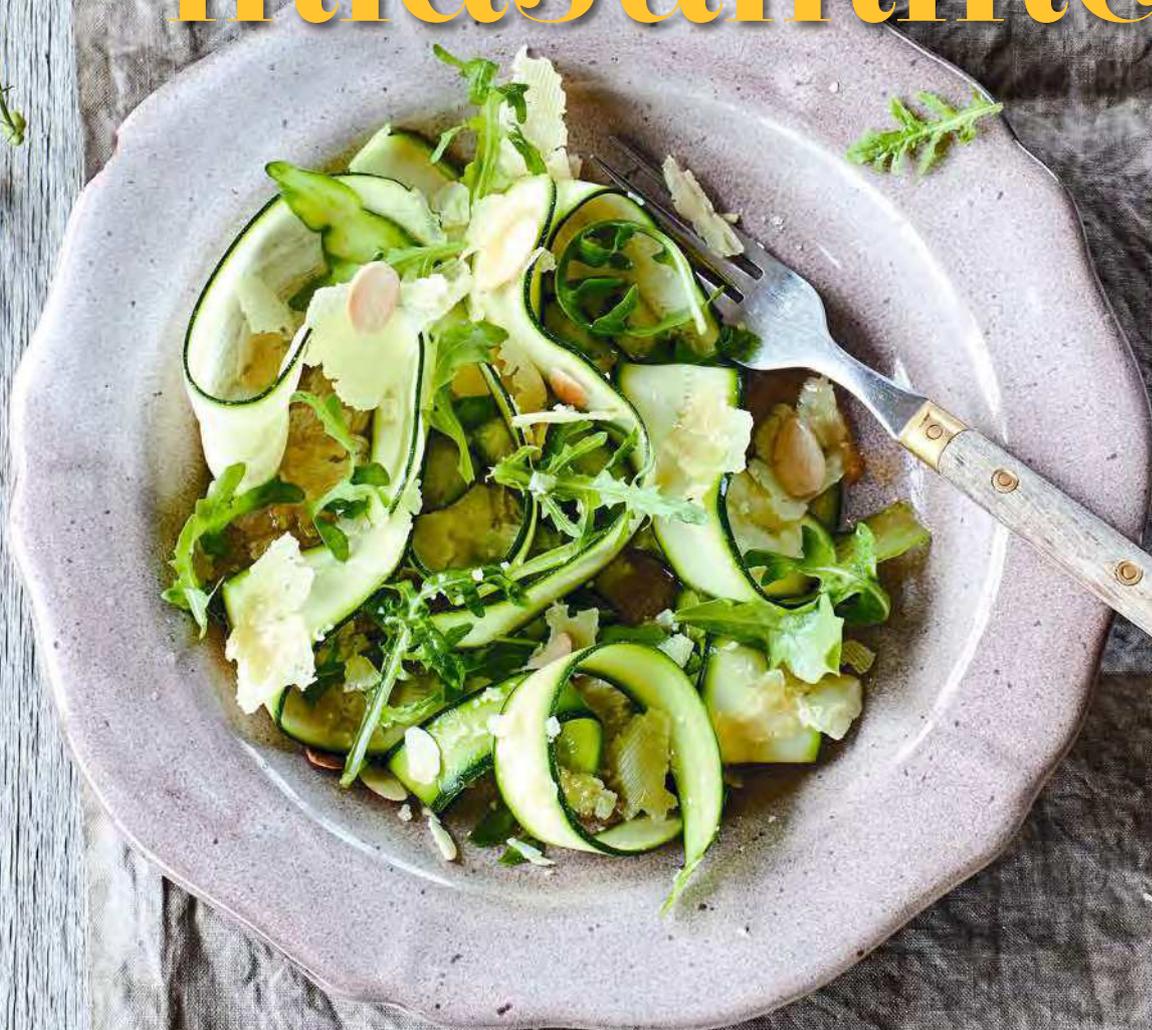
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COOK UP AN IMPRESSIVE  
SCANDINAVIAN-STYLE SUMMER  
SPREAD THE WHOLE FAMILY  
WILL LOVE WITH THESE SIMPLE,  
YET JOYOUS SEASONAL DISHES. »

# Celebrate midsummer!



## ◀ Raw courgette salad with Västerbotten cheese

SERVES 2–3

This salad looks so pretty on the plate. If you don't have a mandoline slicer, use a peeler, but try to peel whole thin slices lengthways, as it looks better on the plate. You can also use a cheese plane instead if you have one. We used Västerbotten cheese, but you can also substitute with pecorino or any similar aged cheese. It's the saltiness of the cheese that really lifts the raw courgette — and with the dressing as well as the nuts, it makes for a really lovely side dish.

50g flaked almonds

2 medium-sized courgettes

1 small bunch of rocket (or other strong-flavoured salad leaves of your choice)

50g Västerbotten cheese, shaved (or use a good pecorino instead)

### For the dressing

3tbsp olive oil

1tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

1tbsp white wine vinegar

¼tsp Dijon mustard

1tsp sugar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

■ Lightly toast the almonds over a gentle heat in a dry frying pan and set aside.

■ Shave the courgettes into thin strips lengthways. You can use a mandoline for this, or a flat metal cheese plane also works well. You want long, thin flat strips.

■ Place the courgette strips in a big bowl, then add the leaves and mix gently. Add the cheese and fold in.

■ Combine the dressing ingredients in a small bowl, whisk well and season to taste. This salad doesn't need much dressing, so don't pour it all on at once — taste as you go along. Scatter the toasted almonds on top of the salad and serve at once.



## ◀ Mushroom paj

MAKES 1 LARGE TART

In Sweden and Norway, wild mushrooms start to appear in the fields and forests in summer. If you are lucky enough to find golden chanterelles, the best thing you can do is fry them in butter and eat them on toasted bread — it is heaven. A great way to use up all the mushrooms is by making this 'paj' — pronounced 'pie', which is actually more like a quiche or a tart.

### For the cheese pastry

125g cold butter, cubed  
200g plain flour  
50g finely grated Västerbotten cheese

¼tsp salt (Västerbotten is salty, so adjust if using a different cheese)

1 egg yolk  
Egg white, for brushing

### For the mushroom filling

500g mushrooms  
25g unsalted butter  
1tbsp plain flour  
2 large shallots  
2 sprigs fresh thyme  
Freshly ground black pepper

### For the egg filling

250ml plus 1tbsp whole milk  
250ml plus 1tbsp double cream

3 eggs  
Freshly grated nutmeg  
30–35g finely grated Västerbotten cheese  
25cm loose-based tart pan

Baking beans

■ In a food processor, briefly blitz the pastry ingredients together to form a dough, adding a tiny bit of chilled water if needed to bring it

together. If you don't have a food processor, you can do this by hand by first rubbing the butter into the flour with your fingertips until crumbly, then adding the rest of the ingredients

and mixing until smooth. Wrap the pastry in clingfilm and rest in the fridge for 30 minutes before using.

■ In a saucepan, dry fry all the mushrooms for several minutes (this concentrates the flavour and avoids too much liquid). Add the butter, flour, onions and thyme and then cook on a low heat with the lid on for 3 minutes. Season with black pepper (not salt at this stage).

■ Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Roll out the chilled pastry until nice and thin and use to line the tart pan evenly. Prick the base with a fork a few times, then line the pastry with baking parchment and fill with baking beans. Blind bake in the preheated oven for about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and immediately brush all over with egg white to seal.

■ Turn the oven temperature down to 160°C/Gas 3. Whisk together all the egg filling ingredients (apart from the cheese) and season well. Add the cooked mushrooms (try not to add too much liquid). Pour the egg mix on top, add the grated cheese and bake in the preheated oven for around 30 minutes.

■ Keep the heat low — too hot and the eggs will overcook. Serve for lunch with a leafy green salad and a glass of crisp white wine in the sunshine. »

## IN THE KNOW

If you can't get chanterelles, substitute with chestnut mushrooms.

## ► Pork loin with summer herb crust & Hasselback potatoes

SERVES 4

We love the combination of tarragon and pork. You can add a gravy to make this more of a roast, or serve on a buffet table with a summer salad.

### For the hasselback potatoes

600g skin-on medium-sized new potatoes  
50ml olive oil  
1tbsp freshly chopped parsley  
3 sprigs fresh thyme, picked  
25g butter, melted  
1 garlic clove, chopped  
1tsp grated lemon zest sea salt

### For the summer herb crust

2tbsp finely chopped fresh tarragon  
2tbsp finely chopped fresh dill  
3tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley  
50g finely grated Parmesan cheese  
50g dried breadcrumbs  
Grated zest of 1 lemon  
2–3tbsp olive oil

### For the pork loin

2–3tbsp plain flour  
Large knob of butter or olive oil  
1 pork loin fillet (around 500g)  
3tbsp Dijon mustard  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

■ Heat the oven to 170°C/Gas 3.

■ First, prepare the hasselback potatoes. Using a small, sharp knife, make small slices widthways across the top of each potato, to create a fan effect. Place in a large roasting tray.

■ Mix the oil and herbs together and coat all the potatoes, ensuring the sliced sides face upwards. Roast in the preheated oven for around 20 minutes.

■ Meanwhile, mix together all the ingredients for the herb crust. Put the flour on a separate large plate.

■ Heat the butter and a glug of oil in a large frying pan. Sear the pork loin over a high heat until just brown on all sides, then roll lightly in the plate of flour and brush all over with the Dijon mustard.

■ Finally, roll the pork in the herb crust mixture until fully covered. Remove the tray of potatoes from the oven and brush them with the melted butter. Sprinkle with the garlic, lemon zest and sea salt. Add the herb-crusted pork loin to the tray, nestled among the potatoes,

and return to the hot oven for around another 20 minutes until the pork is just cooked through and the crust is golden.

■ The potatoes might need a final 5 minutes to crisp up and become fully soft in the middle.

You can leave these in the oven while the pork is resting.

■ Serve the sliced pork and potatoes with gravy as a roast, or as part of a summer buffet table with salads.



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Cassidy © Ryland  
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## ► Summer fruit roulade with lemon thyme

SERVES 8–10

In Swedish, these are called 'rulltårta' — literally, 'rolling cake'. We fill ours with pastry cream and summer fruits.

### For the sponge

120g plus 2tbsp caster sugar  
4 eggs  
100g plain flour  
25g ground almonds  
¼tsp salt  
1¾tbsp butter, melted  
1tsp vanilla sugar or extract

### For the filling

1 nectarine or peach  
120g redcurrants  
20 leaves fresh lemon thyme  
½ quantity of Pastry Cream  
Extra red or white currants  
Icing sugar, to garnish  
35 x 30cm/12 x 14-inch  
Swiss roll pan, lined  
with baking parchment

### For the pastry cream

1 egg yolk  
1 whole egg  
30g cornflour  
80g plus 1tbsp caster sugar  
¼tsp salt  
500ml plus 2tbsp whole milk  
Seeds from 1 vanilla pod  
25g unsalted butter

■ For the pastry cream, whisk together the eggs, cornflour, sugar and salt until well combined and set aside. Heat the milk and vanilla seeds until just boiling in a saucepan. Slowly pour one third of the milk into the egg and cornflour mixture, while whisking vigorously to incorporate, but not scramble, the eggs.

■ Pour the egg mixture back into the saucepan with the rest of the milk. Whisk continuously and bring to the boil again for around 30 seconds until thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter until melted. Cool in a bowl with a layer of baking parchment on top to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate before using.

■ Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas 3.

■ Beat the sugar and eggs at high speed for around 5–6 minutes until ribbon stage (the whisks should leave a trail in the mixture when lifted). Sift together the flour, ground almonds and salt. Fold very gently into the egg mixture — you want to keep all the air bubbles, as this batter contains no other raising agent than



your carefully created bubbles! Lastly, gently fold in the melted butter and vanilla.

■ Pour the cake mixture into the prepared cake pan. Spread evenly and bake in the preheated oven for about 12–15 minutes. Remove from the oven. To minimise the chance of the cake cracking, roll it around a clean tea towel when still slightly warm and allow to cool.

■ Meanwhile, chop the peach or nectarine into small chunks and mix in a bowl with the redcurrants and lemon thyme leaves. Place in a sieve and leave over a bowl so

that the excess liquid can drain.

■ Carefully unroll the cooled cake and spread a layer of pastry cream evenly over the whole sponge. Then spoon the fruit mixture evenly across, making sure there is a generous amount in what will be the middle of the roulade. Carefully start rolling the cake tightly around the fruit, using the baking parchment to help you — ending with the edge of the cake underneath. Chill until ready to eat. Garnish with more berries and dust the top with icing sugar just before serving. ■

# Can affirmations really boost your confidence?

THEY'RE BEING BILLED AS THE NEXT BIG THING IN BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM, BUT DO AFFIRMATIONS REALLY WORK? **LOUISE RAMSAY** DELVES INTO THE WORLD OF FEELGOOD DECLARATIONS TO FIND OUT MORE.

The recent year has been difficult for many to say the least — for a lot of our readers at Platinum, time spent alone or shielding has been the new normal. But as our world starts to open back up, we're getting ready to safely get back out there. And yet, in all the excitement to see loved ones, you may be feeling a little anxious or apprehensive about the next chapter. Enter affirmations.

Anji McGrandles is a mental wellbeing expert and founder of The Mind Tribe, [themindtribe.co.uk](http://themindtribe.co.uk). Her coaching focuses on mindset and positive change. She explains, "Affirmations or what I call 'mind drills' are positive statements repeatedly used to reprogramme the subconscious mind, to override any self-sabotaging beliefs with positive ones, or to change your behaviours.

"Affirmations are simply statements that are designed to create positive self-change in the person using them. They are very personal, so there is not a one size fits all, however people tend to focus on statements that bring about positive change. Self-esteem and goal affirmations are popular."

In a 2014 review paper, *The Psychology of Change: Self-Affirmation and Social Psychological Intervention*, psychologists Geoffrey Cohen and David Sherman define self-affirmation as "an act that demonstrates one's adequacy". Doesn't that word, adequacy, make affirmations sound less "out there"? It's not overstating who you are or being big-headed with over-confidence. It's simply saying out loud the abilities you have or qualities you uphold. The idea of standing in front of a mirror, staring yourself in the eye and saying firmly, "I am



strong. I am confident. I am capable,” might have you squirming with discomfort. But surely that’s the issue to tackle?

For many women, the idea of talking about ourselves in a positive light somehow goes against the grain. But why should there be shame in being proud of who you are?

As Anji says, “What we believe about ourselves at a subconscious level can have a significant impact on the outcome of events in our

lives. Affirmations make people receptive to new ideas and can assist in bringing change about through tapping into our super smart brain and ‘training’ it to operate differently. Neuroplasticity is the science of rewiring the brain to think differently. With practised, conscious effort, you can rewire your brain. One of the best ways to do this is by using positive affirmations.

“Repeating an affirmation can help boost your motivation and confidence, but you still have to take more action yourself. Try thinking of affirmations as a step toward change, not the change itself. ‘I’m capable of great things’ is good affirmation to remind yourself that you can achieve

fabulous things whether that is in relationships, at work or at home.”

This rewiring of thoughts can be difficult — when your brain has sturdy thought patterns, it takes comfort in defaulting to them and so pulling them up by the foundations can be a challenge. Change doesn’t happen overnight and so patience is key. Start small. You might be tempted to jump into the deep end, but too many affirmations can leave you feeling frustrated and pulled in different directions.

And as Anji explains, it’s no easy fix to remedy decades of negative self-talk. “Consistency is key. The more you do something then it becomes a habit and part of your subconscious thinking. Our mind then defaults to that positive thought instead of the old negative thought. I would recommend mind drilling your affirmation — repeating it to yourself habitually throughout the day, every day, for up to 12 weeks, to work towards significant changes.

“Affirmations don’t work for everyone. Negative ideas and self-talk will hold you back, but sometimes these ideas come from something deep rooted, which may require the help of a therapist.”

So if you’re feeling low or uninspired, take yourself to a mirror and really look at yourself. Take time to see who you are, rather than glancing quickly away. And then, no matter how uncomfortable you feel, look yourself in the eye and tell yourself that you can do the things you want to do. That you’re capable and worthy of good things. Tell your reflection you believe in yourself. You might be surprised how emotional that moment could be — and the doors it may open up.



Mental wellbeing expert  
Anji McGrandles

“Override your self-sabotaging beliefs with positive ones and change your behaviours.”



## How to **GET STARTED**

**GET CLEAR ON YOUR AFFIRMATION.** What do you want to achieve?

**WRITE DOWN YOUR AFFIRMATION** and set it in the present tense (it’s good to try to sum it up in a sentence). For example, you might want to write a best-selling novel so your affirmation might be, ‘I’m a best-selling author and my book is number one in the UK’. To help you internalise your statement and to make it more powerful you need to use ‘I’.

**PUT YOUR AFFIRMATION SOMEWHERE YOU WILL SEE IT DAILY.** This could be on your fridge, mirror or phone.

**BUILD AFFIRMATIONS INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.**

When you are brushing your teeth in the morning, repeat it to yourself. When you are out for a walk, have it on loop. And before you go to bed, again, say it to yourself. The more you do this, the better. If you have a regular meditation practice, build it into that, too. ■



**“Working for  
Women’s Aid, giving  
something back and  
using my skills for  
good is so uplifting.”**

WITH THE RECENT DEATH OF SARAH EVERARD CAUSING A DEBATE AROUND WOMEN'S SAFETY, MANY HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER THE LAW IN THE UK NEEDS TO BE UPDATED TO BETTER PROTECT WOMEN. **GEMMA CALVERT** SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN WHO ARE LEADING THE CHANGE.

**R**eclining on a sun lounger outside her self-catering apartment in Mallorca, Jill\* held her book to her face and behind the shield of printed pages allowed silent tears to flow. Just hours earlier, following an evening of dinner and holiday cocktails, her long-term partner Peter\* had unleashed a violent tirade of physical and verbal abuse.

“We’d had this blazing row about absolutely nothing and he put his fist through the apartment door. I’d got into bed with him to calm him down and he literally threw me out and called me a wh\*re. I spent the night in a chair on the balcony wrapped in a blanket, too petrified to move in case of what he’d do next,” remembers Jill, 71.

“The next morning he was like a pussycat, acting as though nothing had happened, and in that moment, I thought, ‘Maybe this is it, maybe he has changed’.”

But there was always a next time. During their 28-year relationship, Jill regularly experienced the full force of Peter’s uncontrollable rage. “He was like a bomb waiting to go off,” says Jill. “On another holiday to Ibiza, he attacked me in our hotel bedroom. I was badly bruised and could hardly walk for days so had to stay covered up.

“One time he pushed me over in the conservatory and broke my wrist. I once ended up with a black eye so I couldn’t visit my mum for a couple of weeks. One night, I was in bed after a row and he came up the stairs calmly and tipped the bed up. I nearly went through the window. I only went to the police once, but wouldn’t press charges.

“He was like Jekyll and Hyde. So nice one minute, but a madman the next. I loved one part of him, but hated and was afraid of the other.

“He was so unpredictable, I feared for the safety of my family if he was prosecuted so I did nothing.”

Tragically, Jill’s experience is far from isolated. According to a recent report by End Violence Against Women (EVAW) almost one in three women will experience domestic abuse and two women aged 16-59 a week in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner. Every year on International Women’s Day, their

names are read out in the House of Commons by Jess Phillips, Labour’s shadow minister for domestic violence and safeguarding.

Then there are the shocking numbers of women that are raped or sexually assaulted. More than 750,000 adults aged 16-74 were victims of sexual assault or attempted sexual

assault in the year ending March 2020. Coupled with year-on-year reductions in prosecutions and convictions, a problem rooted, some believe, in victims’ fear of not being believed and lack of faith in the justice system.

In March this year, following widescale protests in the days after the death of 33-year-old marketing executive Sarah Everard, police confirmed that misogyny will be recorded as a nationwide hate crime in England and Wales — a move dubbed a “game-changer” by campaigners who believe women will now be encouraged to report public sexual harassment.

In April 2019, upskirting — taking a sexually intrusive photograph up someone’s skirt without their permission — also became a criminal offence in England and Wales after a campaign by Gina Martin, who was targeted at a music festival in 2017.

But more needs to change. Women’s rights charity The Fawcett Society recommend strengthening the laws on sexual harassment at work and making any breach of a domestic abuse order a criminal offence.

And across Britain, scores of proactive, strong and empowered women are united in that fight for improved female safety.

For years, Kayte Burns, 50, from Godalming in Surrey, has helped sexual abuse survivors and fought for women’s rights after being sexually assaulted on the London Underground. The married mum-of-one was on a packed morning train in 2001 when a male commuter reached into her blouse and touched her breasts.

Kayte reacted by leaping up, punching the offender and breaking his nose. Incredibly, when both parties were taken to a police station, it was Kayte who was subsequently prosecuted.

“There was no mention of sexual assault. The entire focus of the investigation was me breaking this guy’s nose and the letter from the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] simply said the man had ‘grabbed me’ and that my reaction had been too severe, so he was the victim,” explains Kayte. “We went to court and the judge said my penalty was anger management classes to deal with my ‘over reaction’.”

As the years passed, Kayte began struggling with a “huge sense of injustice” about her experience and the problem of female inequality. “I felt I had to do something to contribute to change,” says Kayte, who went on to volunteer for the Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre, taking calls from survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

She is now involved with Circles UK, a charity helping sexual offenders take responsibility for their actions and make positive life changes to stop repeat abuse, and regularly uses social media to voice her views on the importance of female equality.

“Helping to raise awareness is the first step,” says Kayte. “It’s simply about treating women with dignity and respect. Who doesn’t hear stories of women in their work place who are treated badly, who are under-represented, »

**Government data** shows in the year to the end of **March 2020**, just

**1.4% of 55,130 rape cases** recorded by police resulted in **prosecution**

# People



The Head & Neck Cancer Foundation CEO, Michelle Vickers, has experienced domestic abuse and works to help other victims through Women's Aid.

who are paid less than their male counterparts, who are spoken to inappropriately by men in positions of power?

“Until the patriarchy is challenged and changed we will never achieve equality or a safe society for women.”

Helping other victims of abuse can often be a positive step to personal recovery, explains Zoë Clews, a PTSD, trauma and anxiety specialist. “It allows you to see your own experience a step removed,” she says. “It can be an opportunity to recognise

and view your own situation objectively through the lens of someone else’s experience, and to frame the actions you need to take to address your circumstances in the logical and rational advice and support you give to them”

It’s an explanation that resonates with Michelle Vickers, 56, a trustee for High Wycombe Women’s Aid refuge, which provides safety for women and children at risk of harm in their own homes.

The Head & Neck Cancer Foundation CEO was inspired to volunteer her professional expertise and time to the domestic abuse charity following a teenage experience of emotional abuse, which had a life-lasting impact.

“He would put me down all the time, over everything. When we broke up, he said, no-one will want you, you’re s\*\*\* on my shoes,” recalls Michelle. “The worst thing about emotional abuse is you believe what you’re told, it’s a form of grooming and you believe you deserve to be spoken to and treated like that. It massively shaped me and my ideals about feminism and women having power over their own lives.

“Working for Women’s Aid, giving something back and using my skills for good is so uplifting. I just want to get women and children out of danger and do the best for them that we possibly can. That’s hugely empowering.”

When calls to Hourglass, an organisation dedicated to protecting mature adults — people aged 60 or above — from abuse, violence and neglect, surged last year during the first lockdown, the charity responded quickly by reshaping its services. In November 2020, Hourglass launched an instant message service and confidential text facility and it is now rolling out Community Response Hubs across the UK, where victims can get immediate support and understanding. It has also launched the first-ever Knowledge Bank offering information about the abuse of mature people, safer ageing and local agencies that can help.

“Our message is not about living in fear or risking becoming a statistic

— it’s about education and empowerment, awareness and giving people the tools to keep themselves safe, right through to supporting in recovery,” explains Veronica Gray, the charity’s deputy CEO.

Women make up the lion’s share of older people suffering from abuse. The Crime Survey for England and Wales found about 180,000 women aged 60 to 74 were victims of domestic abuse in 2019-2020, and about 98,000 men during the same period. Sadly, only a fraction of cases end in convictions. But why?

Veronica, from Newry, Northern Ireland, says there are two main challenges — firstly, perpetrators are frequently family members so sufferers are “reluctant to criminalise their actions”. The other issue mature women have is simply being believed.

“This age-old problem continues despite huge campaigns and changes in legislation to put the ‘victim’ first,” says Veronica. “Hourglass seeks to listen, support and find the right next steps. We now need our parliamentarians and influencers to listen too and support charities like us to ensure a safer ageing society.”

Last year, Dr Hannah Bows, an associate professor of criminal law at Durham University and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse, was seconded to the Scottish Parliament to conduct research on potential legal reforms to address violence and abuse against older people. She recommended a wholesale scrutiny of current policies and practices to be more inclusive of mature people, particularly women who she says are “more likely” to experience abuse.

“Age can create specific barriers to accessing support. Many women don’t have financial freedom. The generational norms and practices can also create difficulties — it may be harder to disclose domestic or sexual abuse if you grew up thinking these things were normal, part of marriage or being a woman, or you are not aware that certain behaviours are now recognised as abusive, they may be illegal etc.

“Our crime prevention and awareness-raising campaign material needs not only to ‘speak’ to older people so that they recognise themselves in what they see in posters, realise their experiences of abuse are valid and know where to go for support, but we must also place those posters in places people will see them. Basically, we need to be more inclusive.”

Creating a culture shift within Minority Ethnic communities and stamping out acceptance of domestic violence is the priority for Buckinghamshire-based politician Mimi Harker OBE, 56.

Eight months ago, the mum-of-two set up the Bucks BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Network to raise awareness and solve local social issues and has since been supporting victims of domestic abuse by helping vulnerable



Councillor Mimi Harker OBE.

## In the KNOW

**Charities report mature women who end relationships — even abusive ones — encounter opposition because of ageism and a belief splitting is not necessary.**

women realise there is a way out.

“A lot of different issues feed into [Minority Ethnic] women’s reluctance to get help including fierce loyalty to her family and her community. The network is about creating awareness and telling women, ‘you are not alone’. The more we talk about domestic violence, the less alone women will feel and the more likely they will ask for help because they will learn where they can get that help,” says Mimi, who was a contributor to the Equalities Act 2010 and received an OBE in 2012 for her services to her local community and women, especially those from BAME backgrounds.

“I helped one lady in her fifties whose husband had always been a control freak and very cruel by way of words as well as deeds. There was violence involved, mental cruelty and this woman had been reduced to thinking that she was nothing,” she continues.

“Her four kids had grown up and through two of them, who couldn’t stand seeing their mum bullied to death, I was introduced. When I told the lady about a time that somebody had spoken to me badly, she just smiled and replied, ‘Welcome to my world’. That got the conversation going and now the woman is no longer with her husband. She has found herself a job and for the first time in her life is working, has independence and is volunteering with a charity that helps safeguard women. That story makes my eyes sparkle because that’s one more woman who is out of the grip of abuse.”

While it’s certainly helpful that the government is doubling its Safer Streets fund to a total of £45 million to provide better CCTV and street lighting across the country, many believe fundamental reform to the criminal justice system is needed to make a meaningful difference.



## “TO HELP EVEN ONE WOMAN OUT OF THE GRIP OF ABUSE MAKES MY EYES SPARKLE.”

Others, like Kim Aucott, 58, a family lawyer at Slater Helis Solicitors in Manchester, hope to see the introduction of anti-harassment education in schools. “It needs to start right from the beginning with families, supporting young children and as part of the school curriculum,” she says.

“There needs to be a far greater understanding about relationships and how they should work. Not all kids are from homes where they have good role models. They need to see that violence is not acceptable.”

Men have a part to play too, adds Natalie Marrison, Partner and Head of Abuse Law at Ramsdens Solicitors in Huddersfield. “Although not all men are responsible for making women feel unsafe, all people have a responsibility to challenge misogynistic and predatory attitudes towards women,” she says.

“The main way to make women feel safe is by challenging these

behaviours, coupled with education and awareness, are the best ways to do this, and men can be allies by promoting this.”

Jill was 64 when she found a way out of her abusive relationship with Peter.

She agreed to move out of the home she owned and he lived there until he unexpectedly passed away ten months later.

Since her harrowing experience, Jill has found happiness again in a new relationship, has bought a brand new home and recently launched her own online retail business. “My life turned around when he died and I’ve moved on now,” says Jill.

“My advice to anyone else in my situation is just get out. Nothing is worth what I endured for so many years. I hope telling my story encourages other women to take back their power.”

\*Names changed to protect identities. ■

For a chance to be featured,  
email a pic of yourself to  
[mail@platinum-mag.co.uk](mailto:mail@platinum-mag.co.uk)  
with the subject line  
Street Style.

**SUZY, 70**

"The dress is a  
fabulous charity shop  
find. And no, my hair  
is not dyed! It's all  
natural."

**MY STYLE IS...**

**BOHO MIXED  
WITH CLASSIC.**



# STREET *style*

Platinum ambassadors  
and influencers share  
their inspiring style.



**CAMMI, @CAMMISHAPPYPLACE**

"The dress is from Sexy Modest Boutique, the shoes are from Amazon and the lovely dog is called Toby. I love sharing my style and showcasing fashion for women of all ages."

**MY STYLE IS... MODEST, YET FUN AND TRENDY.**



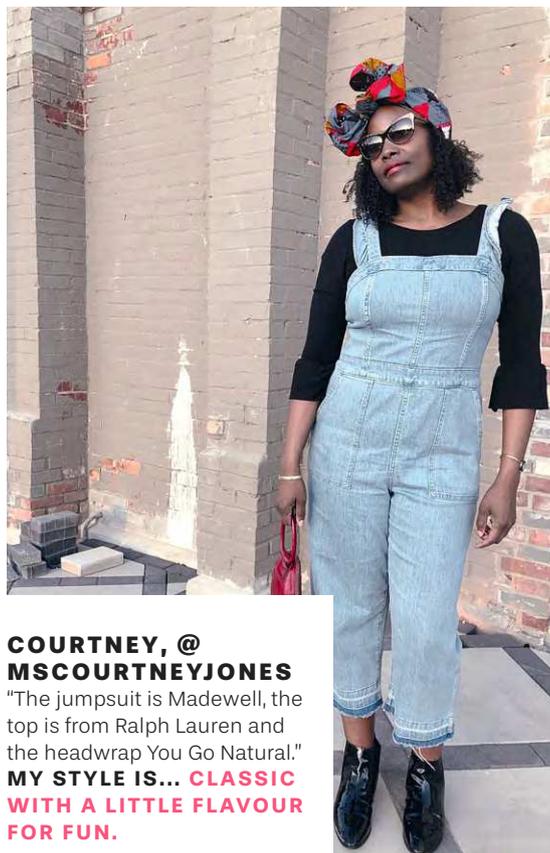
**TANIA, @  
TANIASWORLDOFCOLOURS**

"The skirt is from H&M and the exposed  
shoulders top is from La Maison Simons."

**MY STYLE IS... ROMANTIC  
FEMININITY WITH TRENDY  
COLOURS.**



**JANE, 55**  
 "I love to share my style with others. I've been blogging since 2009."  
**MY STYLE IS... EASY ELEGANCE.**



**COURTNEY, @MSCOURTNEYJONES**  
 "The jumpsuit is Madewell, the top is from Ralph Lauren and the headwrap You Go Natural!"  
**MY STYLE IS... CLASSIC WITH A LITTLE FLAVOUR FOR FUN.**



**JULIA**  
 "My dress is from Monsoon and the slingbacks are from Dune. I'm getting ready for summer weather!"  
**MY STYLE IS... COLOURFUL AND CHIC.**



**CELINE, @JUSTLEFTMY40S**  
 "I love the '70s vibe with this print from Traffic People. They're a fabulous brand."  
**MY STYLE IS... EVERYDAY BOLD. ■**

# Eye-catching evergreen azaleas

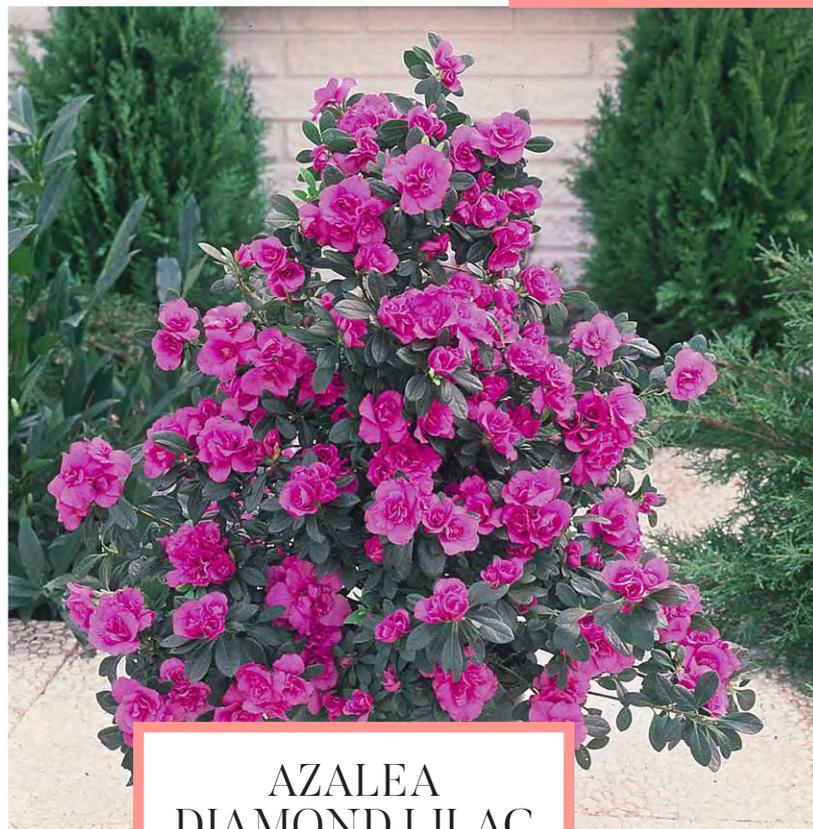


AZALEA  
DIAMOND  
ORANGE

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Only reaching a height of 60-90 cm, these azaleas are ideal for containers and perfect for a stunning patio display. Flowering now, they will grow well in both sunny and partially shaded locations, producing brightly coloured blooms and small, dark green leaves which are retained throughout the year. 9cm pot plants are supplied.



AZALEA  
DIAMOND  
LILAC

CODE: PD130 £7.99

AZALEA  
DIAMOND  
RED

CODE: PD131 £7.99





**AZALEA  
DIAMOND PINK**

**CODE: PD132 £7.99**



**AZALEA  
DIAMOND WHITE**

**CODE: PD133 £7.99**

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# Staying in Going out

OUR ROUND-UP OF TV, BOOK, CREATIVE  
PROJECTS AND LIVE EVENTS, ALL  
PERFECT FOR YOUR FREE TIME.

On-the-go listening



## Fit 'n Chips Chats

**LISTEN NOW**

Amanda Thebe says she is "a force of nature for women who are experiencing menopause hell". Her quest in life is to stay strong, healthy and informed, and in her weekly podcast, you can expect inspirational and entertaining talks meant to help you reach your fitness goals and reboot your zest for life, making you laugh like a happy toddler in the process. Listen on **Apple iTunes** or at **fitchips.podmatic.com**



## Midlife-A-Go-Go

**LISTEN NOW**

Presented by Valerie Albard. Whether flying solo or chatting with special guests, she shares candid discussions on relationships, fitness, living life on your own terms, sex and more. Having spoken to everyone from caregivers and cancer survivors to life coaches and activists, Valerie shows that it's possible to enjoy midlife and skip any cliched talk of crisis! Listen at **midlifeagogo.libsyn.com**



## Great reads



### Talk Bookish to Me

**MAY 27**

Inspiration  
can be  
found in  
the most  
unlikely —

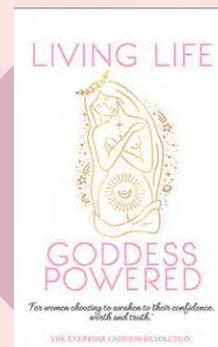
and inconvenient — places. Kate Bromley's fabulous debut tells the hilarious story of writer Kara Sullivan as she endeavours to merge the world of love with the world of books, deadlines and workplace stress.

For fans of *The Hating Game*, *Beach Read* and *Don't You Forget About Me*. Paperback £8.99; **waterstones.com**

### Living Life Goddess Powered

**AVAILABLE NOW**

Curated by spiritual transformation coach Leanne McDonald, who specialises in empowering and helping women to find their voice. From 25 co-authors, all with differing perspectives, backgrounds, and ages, *Living Life Goddess Powered* shares advice on how you can awaken your confidence, worth and truth. Be inspired to feel good about yourself again and allow that magic to flow through you out into the world. Paperback £18; **amazon.com**





Martin McCready at Upfront Photography



## Creative experiences

### Maya Iwabuchi Plays Barber with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra

**SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

There's nothing quite like the sound of a full-sized symphony orchestra. Now you can experience it in the comfort of your own home with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). Rising British maestro Angus Webster opens this performance with Scottish film composer Craig Armstrong. Then the RSNO's Leader, Maya Iwabuchi, plays Barber's Violin Concerto — music that's just as gorgeous as you'd expect from the composer of the famous *Adagio*. Digital tickets £16; [rsno.org.uk](http://rsno.org.uk)



### Paxton & Whitfield online cheese tasting

**JUNE 25, 7PM**

Cheese lovers, listen up! This unique masterclass from one of the UK's longest running cheesemongers offers an hour of live cheese tasting with expert advice on how to find the perfect cheese-and-cracker combination. Five different cheeses and accompaniments are carefully hand-cut, wrapped and delivered to your door by Wednesday, June 23. Limited spaces at £45 per class; [paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)

# On the screen

### The Woman In The Window

**MAY 14**

Based on the best-selling novel and adapted by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Tracy Letts, *The Woman in the Window* follows Dr. Anna Fox — a recluse living alone in her New York City brownstone — as she spends her days drinking wine (maybe a little too much), watching old movies and, well, spying on her neighbours. In this gripping thriller, no one and nothing is what it seems. Originally meant for release last year, you can now stream officially on [netflix.com](http://netflix.com) from May 14th.

### The Mauritanian

**STREAM NOW**

A defence attorney, her associate and a military prosecutor uncover a far-reaching conspiracy while investigating the case of a suspected 9/11 terrorist imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay for six years. Featuring a phenomenal cast with Jodie Foster, Tahar Rahim, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley, you can watch the critically acclaimed thriller on [Amazon Prime Video](http://AmazonPrimeVideo.com) now.

### Ammonite

**STREAM NOW**

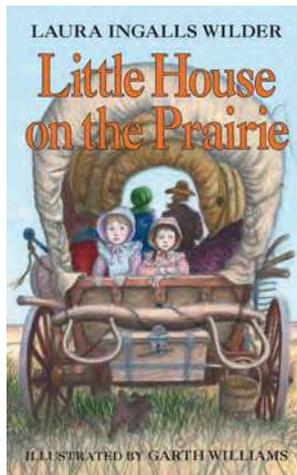
Acclaimed 1840s palaeontologist Mary Anning (Kate Winslet), works alone on the wild coastline of Lyme Regis. Her famed discoveries behind her, she finds herself in a friendship with a tourist (Saoirse Ronan of *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Little Women*). From different worlds, they find they can offer one another what each has been searching for: the realisation that they are not alone. Longlisted for nine Baftas; [Amazon Prime Video](http://AmazonPrimeVideo.com) and [YouTube](http://YouTube.com). ■

# The books that made me



NOVELIST **ESTHER FREUD** SHARES THE BOOKS THAT HAVE SHAPED HER LIFE.

## The book I loved as a child



### LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Laura Ingalls Wilder

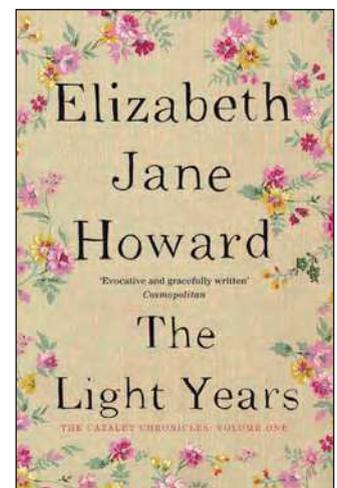
During those non-reading years my mother read to me — *The Hobbit*, *The Arabian Nights*, *The Adventures of Monkey*, but it was Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* series that I loved most. I was intrigued to hear how she wove stories out of her own growing up, something I was already starting to do — a way of making sense of our many adventures and peripatetic life.

## The book that makes me laugh

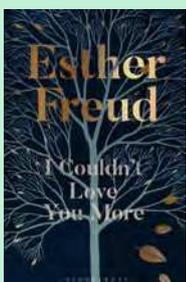
### THE LIGHT YEARS

Elizabeth Jane Howard

In the last year, I've been reading Elizabeth Jane Howard's *The Cazalet Chronicles* and have laughed out loud often at the brilliance of her dialogue. She has an acute ear for the eccentricities of children, which she undercuts with real and moving psychological truth.

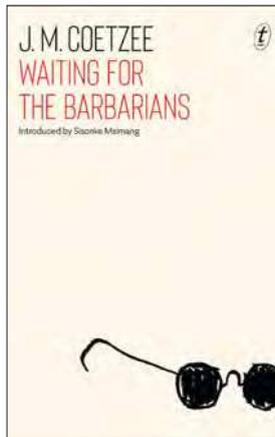


I struggled to learn to read as a child — dyslexia was not widely understood — and I spent several years stuck on the school text, *Heidi*. Then, when I was 10, I picked up a paperback, *For the Love of Anne* by James Copeland, detailing the story of an autistic girl's journey from lost child to responsive young woman. There was something about its urgency and passion that caught me and, like a miracle, I was reading. From then on I read anything I could get my hands on.



*I Couldn't Love You More* by Esther Freud, £16.99, published by Bloomsbury

### The book that makes me cry

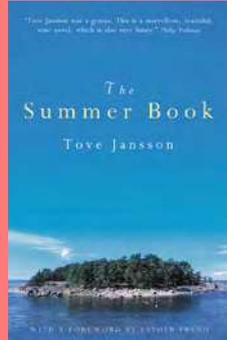


#### WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS

J M Coetzee

This book broke my heart. The sickening inevitability of unfolding events as Professor Joll from the Third Bureau of the Civil Guard arrives in a small frontier town in South Africa, determined to make an impression. Even if it means the pointless torture of two captured 'Barbarians' — an old man and his sick nephew — on their way to see a doctor.

### The book that I always go back to

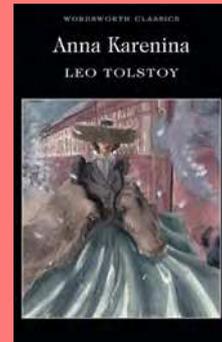


#### THE SUMMER BOOK

Tove Jansson *The Summer Book* by Tove Jansson is wise and funny, and reminds me of the beauty of what is close at hand. Her two main characters — an elderly

grandmother and a recently bereaved child — roam a remote Finnish island over one long summer, examining every flower and rare moss. It's a book that provides its own unique form of consolation and in order to write an introduction for it, I actually visited the island.

### The book that inspires me

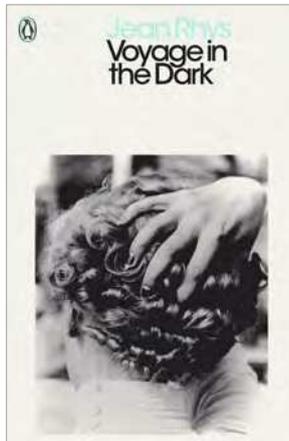


#### ANNA KARENINA

Leo Tolstoy Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* seems to me to be the perfect novel. With humour, philosophy, romance and

suspense — it contains it all, and reminds me when I'm in a doubtful mood, that there is nothing more inspiring than a book. It is my desert island read, consoling and transporting in its brilliance. If you haven't read it yet, do so now.

### The book that changed my life



#### VOYAGE IN THE DARK

Jean Rhys

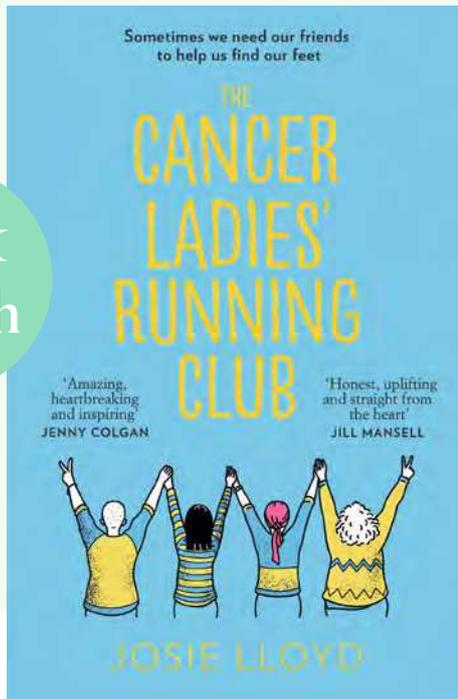
I picked up a copy of Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* on a market stall when I was in my early twenties. As soon as I saw it I knew it was for me. The simplicity of the prose, the dream-like nature of the story, the precise observations, it gave me the glimmer of the thought that maybe, one day, I might write something.

## THIS MONTH'S AUTHOR

- Esther has written over eight books and a play, including *Peerless Flats*, *The Wild*, *The Sea House* and *Mr Mac and Me*.
- Her debut *Hideous Kinky* was shortlisted for the John Llewellyn Rhys prize and was turned into a film, starring Kate Winslet.

- Her play *Stitchers* was a sell-out run in London at the Jermyn Street Theatre in 2018.
- She's written for magazines and newspapers, as well as teaching creative writing at her local group. ■

Book  
of the  
month  
...



### THE CANCER LADIES' RUNNING CLUB

JOSIE LLOYD

Inspired by the author's personal experience, this is a wise, warm and wonderful novel about a group of women who join a running group whilst undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Keira is totally blind-sided by her diagnosis — she doesn't want to tell her family or step back from work, but most of all she does not want to be in the cancer club or to be defined by the C-word.

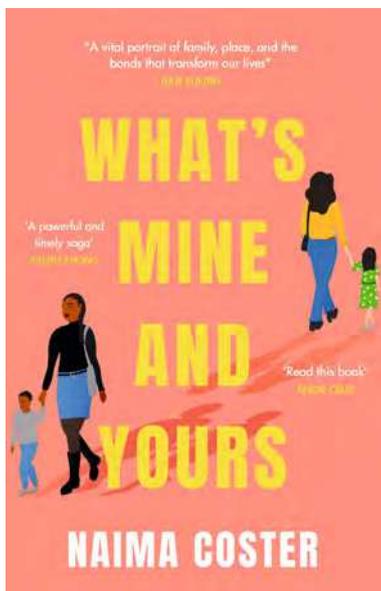
And yet through hot, sweaty, Lycra-clad running with other women all going through the same as her, Keira finds the hope she so urgently needs to put one foot in front of the other. She does this both literally (which is enough for a while) and then metaphorically, as she finds the strength through companionship and solidarity to face her circumstances. This is an incredibly moving, uplifting and hopeful story that looks at the power of finding your tribe. It will make you smile and love life just a little bit more.



GREAT READ

# BOOK CLUB

**ADELE PARKS** SHARES THE LIGHT-HEARTED  
READS YOU SHOULD PICK UP FOR YOUR SUMMER.



### WHAT'S MINE AND YOURS

NAIMA COSTER

With clear focus, Coster looks at race, class and family in an original, gripping and compassionate way. This multi-generational story examines the consequences of a community initiative that draws students from the largely Black part of town into predominantly white high schools. Jade, Gee's steely, ambitious mother is determined to give her son the tools he'll need to survive in America as a sensitive, young Black man. Noelle's headstrong mother, Lacey May, refuses to see her half-Latina daughters as anything but white. Their paths collide, and their two seemingly disconnected families form messy ties that will shape their lives for decades to come. A heart-wrenching, generous story about deep love and passion.



### WORST. IDEA. EVER

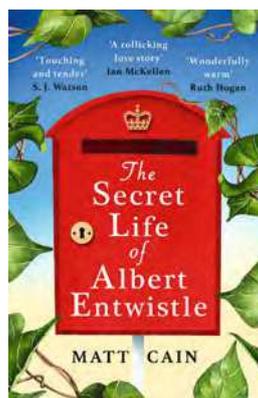
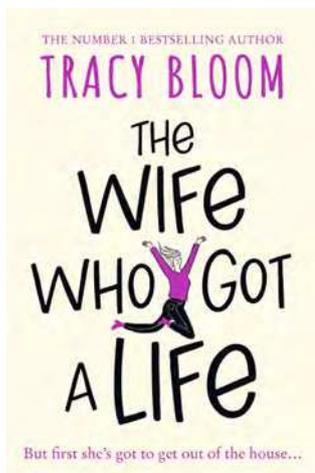
JANE FALLON

Jane Fallon cleverly blends the themes of friendship, duplicity and secrets in this incredibly funny and original novel. Georgia and Lydia are best friends, so when Lydia starts an online business that struggles, Georgia sets up a fake Twitter account to give her friend some anonymous moral support by posing as a potential customer. But the trouble starts when Lydia begins to confide things to her new internet pal that Georgia had been unaware of. Fallon constructs a nail-biting situation and has us turning the pages at speed. It's a gasp out-loud moment when Lydia reveals a secret that takes them past the point of confession. Georgia is in too deep. She has to work out what to save — her marriage, her friendship or herself? Fraught and fabulous, pacy and persuasive.

## THE WIFE WHO GOT A LIFE

TRACY BLOOM

If your book club is looking for a fun read to kick off the summer, then look no further. You will bounce through this novel, giggling all the way. Bloom perfectly captures the jubilant anarchy of family life in this novel, which will appeal to women who read *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Cathy is mother to two teens, wife, dog-owner, good friend and neighbour, reliable book club attendee and it's all fine, really, just a bit exhausting! Cathy starts to notice that she's too depleted to even check if she's happy. Then her husband beats her to the midlife-crisis bombshell and Cathy decides that after years of putting herself last, she is going to be first for a change. Bloom's characters are relatable and real. You will laugh out loud.



## THE SECRET LIFE OF ALBERT ENTWISTLE

MATT CAIN

64-year-old Albert Entwistle has been a postie in a quiet town in Northern England for all his life, living alone since his mother's death 18 years ago. He has always kept himself to himself and as a result doesn't have friends or much to look forward to. With retirement

looming, a lonely future seems inevitable and terrifying. Albert decides it is finally time to be honest about who he is. Things have changed since he was a young man, and he still has time to make the most of that. So Albert sets out to find the long-lost love of his life, George, a man he has never forgotten. This is a heart-warming, joyous love story — original, hopeful and totally charming.

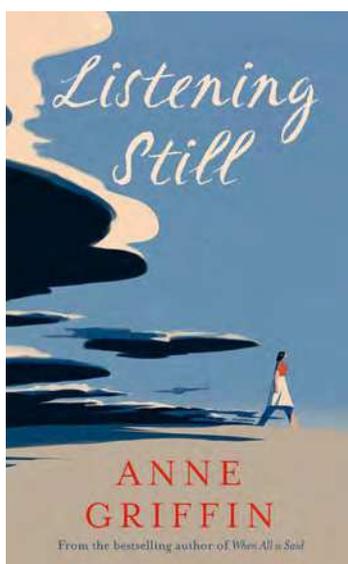
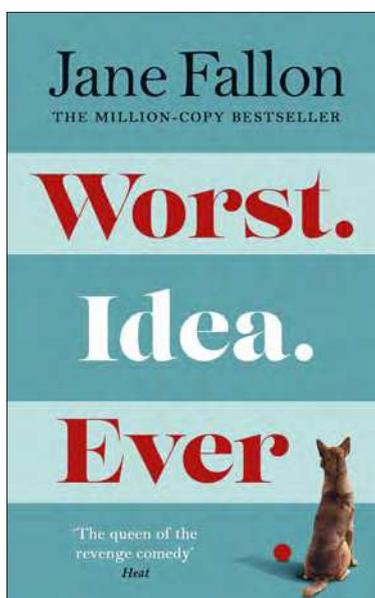


PLATINUM EXPERT  
Adele Parks

Multi-million selling author Adele has written 20 novels and all of them have made bestseller lists. Her next book, *Both of You*, is out on May 21. She says one of her favourite aspects of being Platinum's book reviewer is that she gets to champion new writers.

FOLLOW ADELE ON TWITTER @ADELEPARKS  
AND INSTAGRAM @ADELE\_PARKS

Pick up a copy of *Just My Luck* by Adele Parks, published by HQ.



## LISTENING STILL

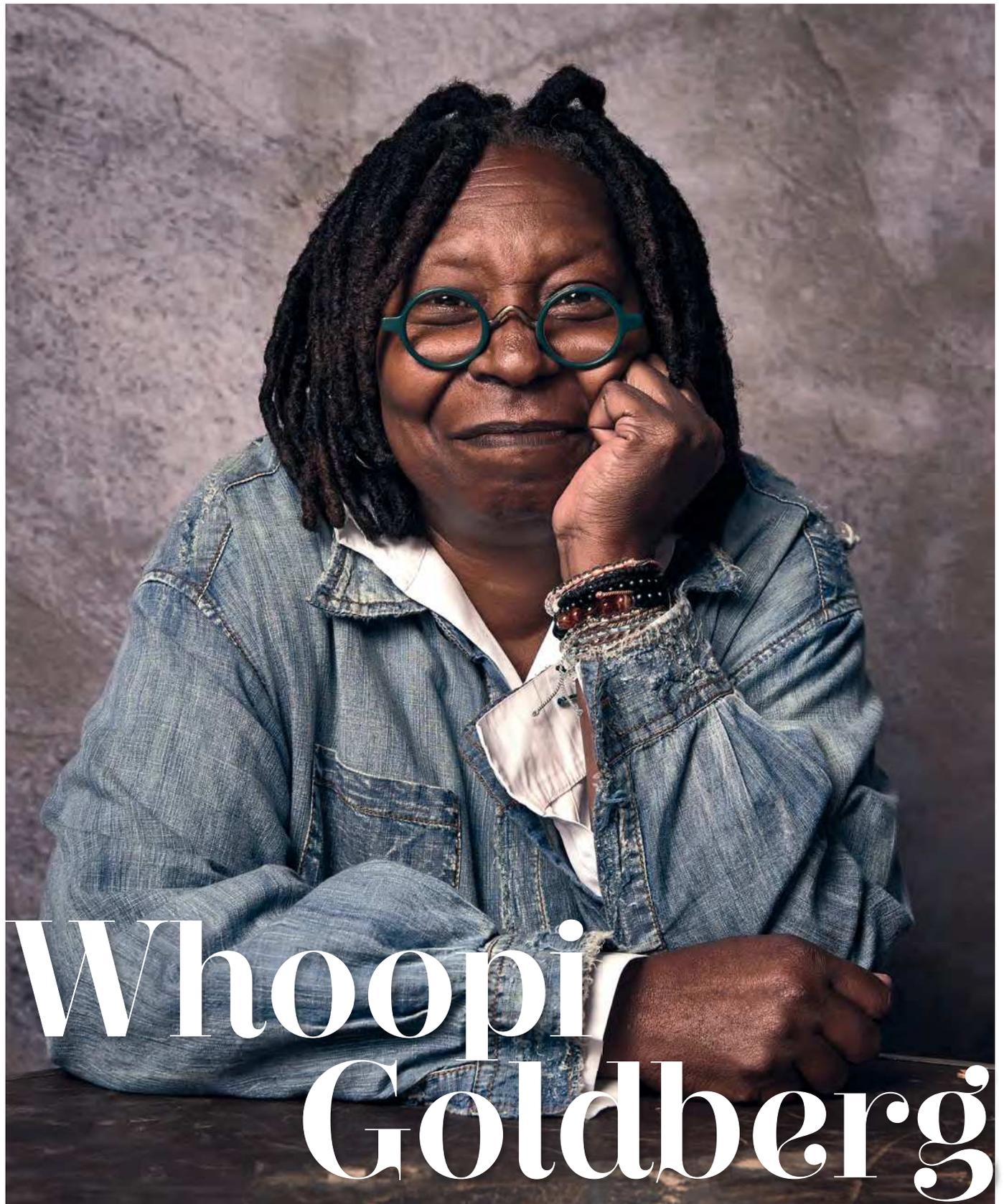
ANNE GRIFFIN

I love the concept of this book. Jeanie has an extraordinary gift — she can hear the recently dead and give voice to their final wishes and revelations. Inherited from her father, this gift has enabled the family undertakers to flourish in their small Irish town. Yet she has always been uneasy about censoring some of the dead's last messages to the living. So when Jeanie's parents unexpectedly announce their plan to retire, she has a chance to break free from the role she both loves and hates, but she is unaware she is not the only one who has been softening the truth. Such beautiful prose, there is a real sense of beauty and longing in this masterfully crafted story.



What books have you loved recently — and what's on your to-be-read pile? Tell us what our next great read should be at [mail@platinum-mag.co.uk](mailto:mail@platinum-mag.co.uk) For more must-read books, head to our website [platinum-mag.co.uk](http://platinum-mag.co.uk) ■

— PLATINUM SHE-RO —



FROM DRUG ADDICTION AND DYSLEXIA TO THE A-LIST AND AWARDS APLENTY, THIS MONTH'S SHE-RO TURNED HER LIFE AROUND TO BECOME A SUPERSTAR. A ROUND OF APPLAUSE, PLEASE, FOR THE MAGNIFICENT **WHOOPI GOLDBERG**.

Sometimes it's hard to believe there's only one Whoopi Goldberg. She's a woman of so many talents: actor, producer, comedian, talk show host, author, singer, fashion designer, philanthropist, entrepreneur... and, um, bricklayer.

Yes, before the glamour of Hollywood and the buzz of the Broadway stage, Whoopi earned her living on a building site. Her other jobs included funeral parlour make-up artist, garbage collector and bank teller.

As her career path proves, she's never been a fan of the word "normal". And it's that unconventional spirit that makes us love her even more. We always get the impression she couldn't give a damn what anyone else thinks of her, and that means she's refreshingly candid and, of course, hilarious with it.

Take the inspiration for her stage name, for example. Some stars would rather crawl under a rock than embrace a flatulence-themed moniker, but Caryn Johnson — as she was once known — went as far as devoting an entire chapter of her autobiography to telling her windy origin story. A habit of, well, letting it all out in rehearsals drew comparisons to a whoopee cushion, and the name stuck.

It was during a one-woman show in the mid-80s that Whoopi grabbed the attention of director Steven Spielberg, who cast her as the lead in *The Color Purple*. Her performance is phenomenal in the film, and led to her nomination for her first Oscar.

If her rise to fame sounds like a walk in the park, the reality was very different. Rewind to her childhood, and we find a girl struggling with undiagnosed dyslexia, who eventually dropped out of school and became hooked on drugs. At 18 she gave birth to her daughter Alex, and lived with very little money until her

dream of breaking into acting came true.

Whoopi didn't take home the Oscar for *The Color Purple*, but she was nominated again, this time in the Supporting Actress category, for her turn in *Ghost* — and won. She was the first Black woman in 50 years to win the award. The trophies kept rolling in, and in 2002 she became the first African American winner of the coveted EGOT when she joined the handful of people who have clocked up an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony.

Despite the awards and the adulation, Whoopi has never become complacent. Nowadays, she doesn't need to worry about where her next pay cheque is coming from, but that doesn't mean she's checked out. Quite the contrary — even during the pandemic, she's been working

hard, filming talk show *The View* from home, getting ready for a West End run of *Sister Act* and gearing up to reprise the role of Guinan (a character she played on television for five years) in the next season of *Star Trek: Picard*.

As well as entertaining the world in so many ways, Whoopi gives us yet another reason to admire her by being a passionate campaigner and activist. Not content with simply donating money to good causes (though she does plenty of that, too), she's a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador; advocates for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans rights; spreads awareness of children's issues, substance abuse and AIDS; and for years she made people laugh as the co-host of America's Comic Relief, raising funds to help the homeless.

Whoopi is a whirlwind of talent, generosity, wit and wisdom — a woman who never rests on her laurels or forgets where she came from, and who's happy to give others a helping hand on their own journey to success.

**“TALENT,  
GENEROSITY,  
WIT AND  
WISDOM.”**



## WHAT WHOOPI SAYS

“Normal is just a cycle on a washing machine.”

“AN ACTRESS CAN ONLY PLAY A WOMAN. I'M AN ACTOR, I CAN PLAY ANYTHING.”

“When you are kind to someone in trouble, you hope they'll remember and be kind to someone else. And it'll become like a wildfire.”

“I AM WHERE I AM BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN ALL POSSIBILITIES.”

“I don't have pet peeves like some people. I have whole kennels of irritation.”

Visit [platinum-mag.co.uk](http://platinum-mag.co.uk) for more stories of inspirational women. ■

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- And relax... The best of UK spa breaks
- Kick back in 5\* luxury in sunny Marbella
- Mark Lane's 5-step guide to your most luscious lawn ever!



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OUR POSITIVE, SUMMERY AND ENERGY-PACKED JULY EDITION.

ON  
SALE  
JUNE  
2



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- Valentina celebrates breakfasts for a summer's morning
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- Britt Ekland — she's not your average Swedish septuagenarian!
- Gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE on why exercise will always be her saviour

Exclusive  
INTERVIEW



## ◀ FASHION & BEAUTY

- Sizzling summer brights by the beach
- Wear stylish stripes with confidence
- Swimwear for every shape this summer

## + Great reads

- Eating disorders aren't restricted to the young. We investigate the mental health issue affecting women of all ages.
- Not just for A-listers! We explore the world of cosmetic dentistry and what you can achieve with the right expertise and advice.
- It's a marathon, not a sprint. Women in sport have come a long way but not without struggles, sacrifices and challenges. With summer Olympics looming, we chat to empowering women in the field.

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# puzzles

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 192

FROM 10-MINUTE TEASERS TO MORE COMPLEX WORD WORKOUTS, PLATINUM PUZZLES ARE THE ULTIMATE RELAXATION

## CODEWORD

11	23	10	13		5	8	2	23	25	15	13	24	15	10
12		22		13		5		25		5		8		17
17	23	1	10	24		23	3	12	23	21	25	23	1	8
25		18		17		1		5		8		19		23
22	21	12	25	8	1	10	8		16	13	17	8	23	7
12		2		23		15		20		12				14
2	17	23	1	13		21	22	22	25	16	15	9	8	
24		13				23		22				8		9
	13	8	8	13	22	13	23	25		21	23	1	13	22
4				17		8		22		17		13		6
23	10	23	10	15	23		15	2	1	15	13	15	22	1
20		5		12		16		15		22		13		13
23	26	15	22	5	23	13	15	10		17	24	15	1	22
23		16		21		12		23		14		22		6
17	8	16	10	24	8	9	12	25	8		23	1	22	1

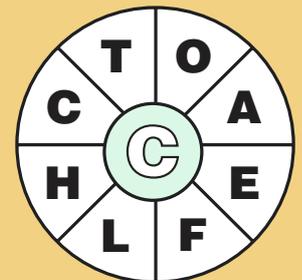
Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by the same number throughout this grid. Use the decoded letters given to work out the identity of other letters and fill in the grid. The alphabet list and reference grid will help you to keep track of the letters you've decoded.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

## WORDWHEEL

You have ten minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each word must be three letters or more and contain the central letter. Use each letter once, and no plurals, foreign words or proper nouns are allowed. There is at least one nine-letter word.



**AVERAGE:** 26 words  
**GOOD:** 36 words  
**EXCELLENT:** 46 words

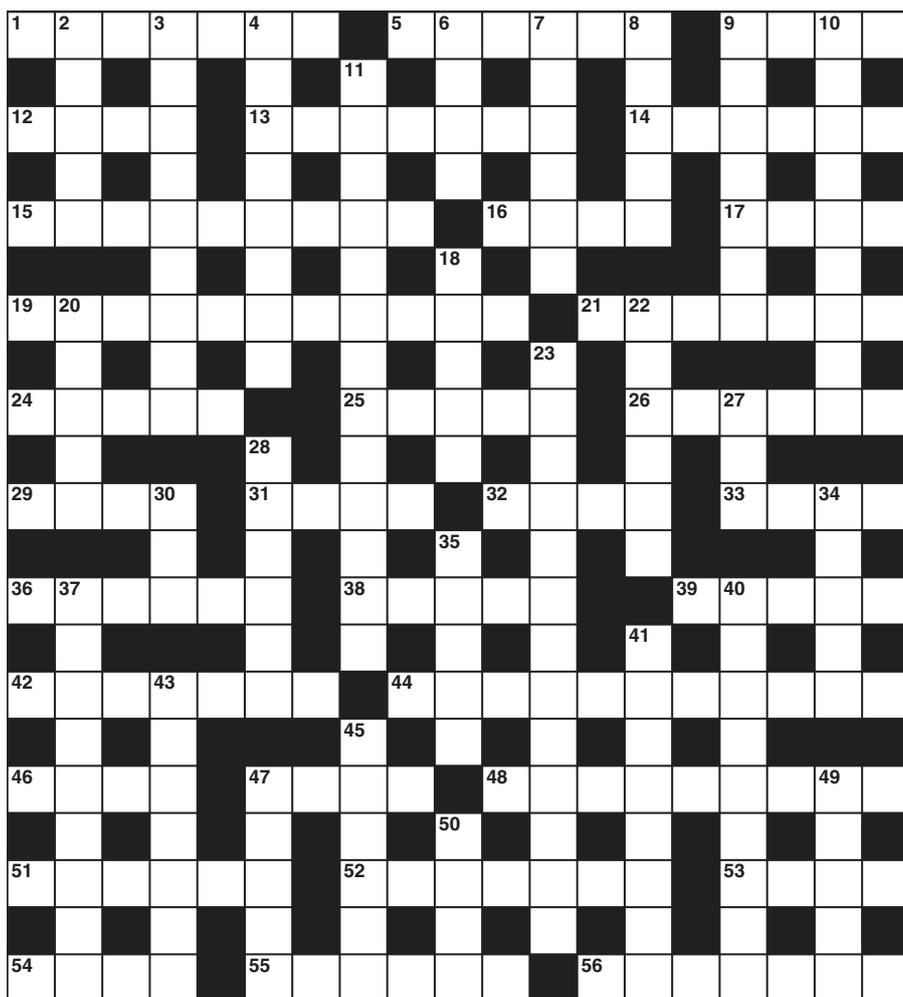
## CELL BLOCK

	4		2	
3				4
			4	
		5		6
	6			
4			3	
	4			4

			6	
	6			3
		3	2	3
			4	4
				3
	6	1		
		4		4

Fill the grid by drawing blocks along the gridlines. Each block must contain the number of squares indicated by the digit inside it. Each block must contain only one digit.

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1 Dash, taste (7)
- 5 Discordant (3-3)
- 9 Famous cricket ground (4)
- 12 Twinge (of hunger) (4)
- 13 NCO's stripe (7)
- 14 Excise (3,3)
- 15 Cake similar to an éclair (5,4)
- 16 Low-heeled (4)
- 17 Fuel dug from bogs (4)
- 19 Hotel cleaning lady (11)
- 21 Flower of apple trees (7)
- 24 Clever, brainy (5)
- 25 Shade of yellow (5)
- 26 Constantly, continually (6)
- 29 Russian ruler (4)
- 31 Saxophone range (4)
- 32 On the house (4)
- 33 Table for working on (4)
- 36 Make secret plans (6)
- 38 Ingenuous, artless (5)
- 39 Wide (5)
- 42 On the increase (7)
- 44 Tailored to individual requirements (6-5)
- 46 Sojourn as a guest (4)
- 47 Burglar's booty (4)
- 48 Caribbean percussion instrument (5,4)
- 51 Alpine sport (6)
- 52 Filled pasta cases (7)
- 53 Hindmost (4)
- 54 Compulsion (4)
- 55 Popular holiday area (6)
- 56 Old tea-carrying sailing vessel (7)

### DOWN

- 2 TV studio sign (2,3)
- 3 Swine keeper (3,6)
- 4 Engaged (8)
- 6 Dismiss, sack (4)
- 7 Benign (6)
- 8 Racing boat with sails (5)
- 9 Sea creature with eight tentacles (7)
- 10 Excessively complimentary (9)
- 11 Big-headed (4-9)
- 18 Bodily strength (5)
- 20 Soil nutrient (5)
- 22 Idle person (6)
- 23 Act of identifying your location once more (13)
- 27 Large amount of notes (3)
- 28 Be clothed in (4,2)
- 30 Mass of fish eggs (3)
- 34 Slow garden pest (5)
- 35 Nasal passage (5)
- 37 Building's janitor (9)
- 40 Journey to a place and back again (5,4)
- 41 Regal, majestic (8)
- 43 Road's edge (7)
- 45 Seal-like mammal (6)
- 47 Sweetening agent (5)
- 49 Habitual practice (5)
- 50 At all times (4)

## SUDOKU

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9, so that each row, each column and each 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

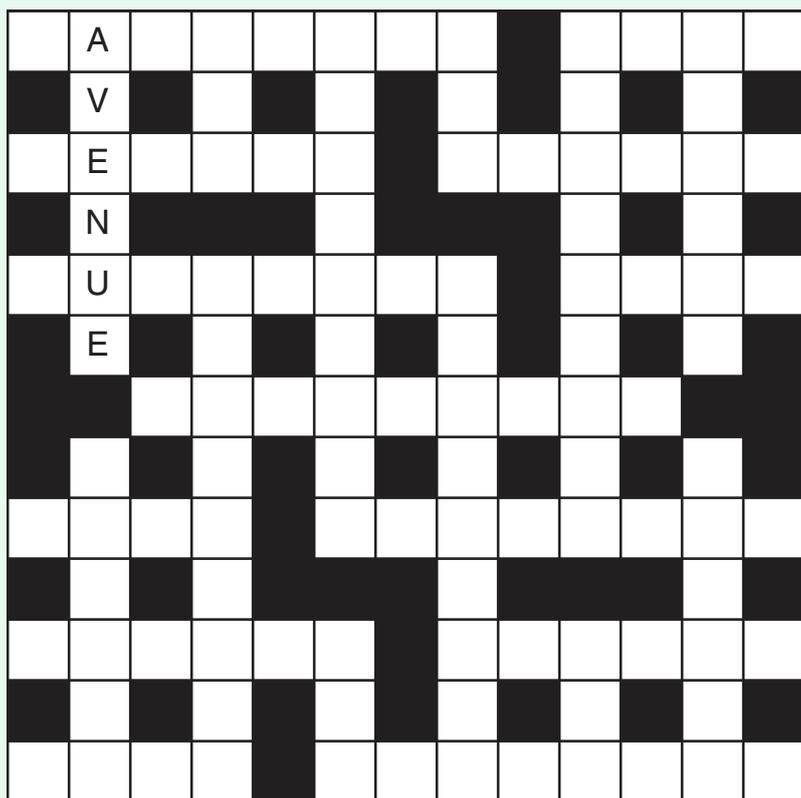
			8		9			
		9	4	3	2	6		
	7		1		6		8	
		3				4		
	8	1				7	5	
8								3
	9		3		4		1	
2			7		1			6

### In the know

Crosswords in various forms are found in almost every country and every language across the world. Advocates believe they improve vocabulary.

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 192

### FITWORD



- 3 letters**
- EAU
- ODD
- WAR
- YEN
- 4 letters**
- RING
- RUDE
- SKEW
- STYE
- 6 letters**
- AVENUE
- BESTOW
- 8 letters**
- CATEGORY
- EVENSONG
- LUSCIOUS
- RESIDENT
- 9 letters**
- COURGETTE
- GUARANTEE
- OUTSOURCE
- REPOSSESS
- SENSELESS

How long will it take you to correctly fit these words into the grid?

## SOLUTIONS

### CODEWORD



NGQBMWKEDCFUT  
YISRJVZPOAHLX

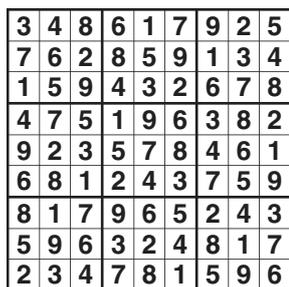
### CROSSWORD



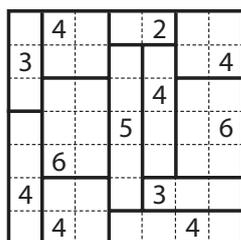
### FITWORD



### SUDOKU



### CELL BLOCK



### WORDWHEEL

The nine-letter word is **FACECLOTH**.



All puzzles © Puzzler Media Ltd - [www.puzzler.com](http://www.puzzler.com)

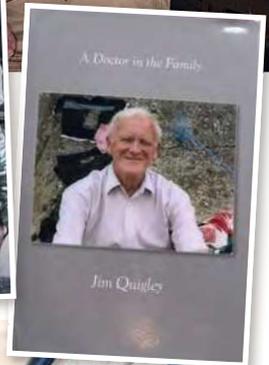
# Everyone has a story

- LET US

## tell yours



Isobel Quigley



If you have ever been told 'you should write a book' as you regale stories of days gone by, then perhaps you should. And you don't need to worry about the process of actually putting pen to paper, as LifeBook does that for you. The world's leading private memoir and autobiography service has a team of project managers, interviewers and ghost writers who will work with you as you

relive your life. They then collate your story in a book which can be cherished by family members for years to come. If you are looking for a project, then consider contacting LifeBook and starting your book-writing. The team is currently conducting virtual meetings with clients and, if you sign up, you will be gifted a free iPad to help you stay in touch during the project.



**You would assume that the bond between Isobel Quigley and her husband of 60 years could not get any stronger, but it did.**

The 85 year old and husband Jim, from Lanarkshire in Scotland,

took on the challenge of writing their life story with leading private memoir and autobiography service, LifeBook, and during the process, became even closer.

The journey started with them participating in more than a dozen one-to-one, hour-long sessions with their interviewer, and ended with them receiving not just one book, but two, for their efforts.

Retired schoolteacher Isobel penned "A Journey through My Life" while former GP Jim, 89, wrote "A Doctor in the Family".

In her book, Isobel wanted to capture how different life was then compared to now and found the whole experience created a stronger bond with Jim. She explained: "We learned so much

about ourselves – and each other.

"We have led our lives for so long, parallel, but the books brought us both closer together."

Jim, who aspired to follow his father and two uncles into medicine, laughed: "Once we started delving into our past, the thing that amazed me most was that we were still married!"

In their books, the couple talk about how they met in a chance meeting – three times in one week, at a hospital in Paisley; on a bus going to Glasgow; then at the student union dance. That was 65 years ago and the couple married in February 1961.

Since then, they have dedicated their lives to caring for people: Isobel as a primary school teacher, Jim as a doctor, and as parents of three children and grandparents of five.

They have recently marked their diamond wedding anniversary, but their silver was one to remember, as a huge surprise was in store – Isobel and Jim's son David sent them off to Bali to celebrate!

For David, who encouraged his parents' book-writing project, it was a chance to learn more about both his two grandfathers.

He said: "I sadly never met them, but I know Mum and Dad were very fond and respectful of their fathers, so their accounts personified my grandparents which was really valuable."

Keen for others to benefit from the LifeBook experience, Isobel added: "It's only when you sit back and think about your life you realise "gosh, I've achieved quite a lot".

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## Make a splash

Over 4 million people in the UK now regularly enjoy wild or open swimming in rivers, ponds, lakes and the sea. Classed as 'cold water therapy' it's reputed to boost the immune system and fight inflammation, but there's no doubt it counts as great exercise and can be a very social pastime. If you fancy dipping a toe in, there are some important do's and don'ts to be aware of — check out [wildswimming.co.uk](http://wildswimming.co.uk) for beginner tips as well as a map of recommended swim sites.

## Feel fabulous

We already think you're fabulous, but if you're always striving to make everything in life just that little bit better (and that's pretty much all of us) try the Fabulous app, free on iOS and Android. Using behavioural science it can help identify areas that could benefit from change, break habits, and help you plot your journey to a new goal. Watch out world, here we come!

# The last word

OUR MUST-KNOW HACKS, BUYS AND LIFE MUSINGS FOR THE MONTH AHEAD.

## Cheers!

Traditional wine decanters always look like they'd be more at home on Sherlock Holmes' sideboard than a modern table, but we're absolutely putting this one on our wish-list. The Eto (it means 'again' in Wales, where the designer Tom Cotton is from) allows you to serve in style and store an unfinished bottle of wine in perfect condition. Hang on — unused wine? Are you joking? Wait — as they point out, it means you can start a second bottle without worry of wastage. That's us on board right there! In clear glass with a choice of metal finish (we love copper), from £119 from [etowine.com](http://etowine.com), [wolfandbadger.com](http://wolfandbadger.com) and [laithwaites.co.uk](http://laithwaites.co.uk)



## And so to bed...

In pursuit of a great night's sleep (and who isn't?) we've discovered banana tea. A rich and natural source of magnesium, it is believed to induce calm and relaxation, leading to deeper sleep. Make it by topping and tailing a banana then boiling the whole fruit — peel and all — in 3-4 cups of water for up to 10 minutes until soft. Strain and discard the fruit, cool a little, and drink an hour before bed. Pyjamas on, job done, thank you and goodnight.



## Get the bug

Does anything ping you back to childhood faster than a familiar Ladybird book? Cinderella's ball dresses still make us shiver with nostalgia! So we're wildly jealous of Helen Day whose interest in Ladybird vintage editions means she's accumulated a vast collection plus original artwork, sharing these and information about the background of the books on her [website ladybirdflyawayhome.com](http://website.ladybirdflyawayhome.com), and Twitter account, @LBFlyawayhome. For true nostalgia visit her touring exhibition — it was cut short by Covid in 2020 but should be running again this year (see website for details).



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist”

Indira Gandhi, first female prime minister of India ■



British Heart  
Foundation



# A gift to us in your Will is a gift to everyone you care about...

Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 of us in the UK. That means a quarter of the people you care about could be lost to them.

But you have the power to change that – by leaving a gift in your Will to the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

You could help scientists to find new treatments and cures – so that our children, grandchildren – and their children too – won't have to fear conditions like heart

disease, stroke and vascular dementia the way we do now.

So when you take care of your loved ones in your Will, please consider remembering the BHF as well – and you could keep them safe from heart and circulatory diseases too.

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