

A BETTER YOU

WANT TO BE HAPPIER, HEALTHIER, SLIMMER? OF COURSE YOU DO. COMBINING THE LATEST KNOWLEDGE FROM THE WORLD'S EXPERTS, OVER THE NEXT THREE WEEKS WE REVEAL A TEN-POINT PLAN TO GET YOU INTO SHAPE – MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY. WITH DELICIOUS RECIPES TO HELP YOU EAT WELL FOR LIFE, YOUR GOOD HEALTH STARTS HERE

It's time to get holistic about your health. Not just because it's January and time for new resolutions, and not just because the release of the movie of the international bestseller *Eat, Pray, Love* will have us all feeling the need to get some spiritual speed in our lives. No, holistic health is important because it is not just about how the body works, it's about understanding how our minds and emotional selves play a part in keeping us healthy.

Over the next three weeks, we will outline a brilliant 10-point plan to get you physically and emotionally to a place of genuine wellbeing. We will show you how to recover your energy, how to stop your past from holding you back, and how to measure your homocysteine levels, a key to good health that most of us have never heard of. We will also have a special issue on how to concentrate on you: how to find "me" time, how to feel strong and confident in yourself, how to find a purpose in life and how to exercise smart. Mental health is just as important as physical health when it comes to how we feel and how we look, and once we're physically and mentally healthy, everything we wish for in life has a way of coming true.

Alongside all of this, we will feature delicious recipes from the Nordic Diet, a diet for life that's not about punishing yourself and cutting back on calories but about guiding you to eating healthy, but scrumptious, food, the kind your body actually needs to function at its optimal level.

To kick it off, we're focusing on the fundamentals. We look at how to get your gut working properly, because what your body digests and absorbs affects your energy, your life span and your state of mind, as well as your general health; how to relax properly, with exclusive tips from the LA guru everyone is talking about; and which health and beauty supplements you should choose from the thousands on offer. We also introduce you to the best foods for good digestion and to protect against ageing.

This new year, there really could be a whole new you – we'll drink (two litres of water a day) to that.

Edwina Ings-Chambers

THE 10 RULES

- 1 LEARN TO RELAX
- 2 PERFECT YOUR DIGESTION
- 3 SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS
- 4 RECOVER YOUR ENERGY
- 5 GET THE PAST OUT OF YOUR PRESENT
- 6 MEASURE YOUR H SCORE
- 7 MAKE MORE 'ME' TIME
- 8 EXERCISE SMART
- 9 REVEL IN 'STRONG' MOMENTS
- 10 FIND YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

1 LEARN TO RELAX

According to the yoga guru Maya Fiennes, learning to chill out is one of the most powerful ways to reinvent yourself. "Relaxation is key to creating a happier, healthier self," she says. "For most women, there is just too much going on, not just physically, but in our heads as well. Our minds are on overload. If you learn to breathe properly and focus on the present moment, you will find it easier to tap into your intuition, that little voice that tells you what it is that would really make you happy."

A former classical pianist, Fiennes, who has been dubbed the Nigella of relaxation, has developed a celebrity following in LA, where she lives with her music-producer husband, Magnus (brother of the actors Ralph and Joseph). It's not hard to see why she is in such demand – she offers strategies that anyone can try without having to check into an ashram.

Fiennes's tips are startlingly new because they are quick and maximise those dead zones of time – queuing in the supermarket, sitting in traffic or waiting for the computer to do its thing. They are based on balancing the chakras, the seven power centres of the body. And the good news is, you can access this energy without contorting your limbs or standing on your head.

CHAKRA-BALANCING ON THE GO

First chakra Governs confidence and security
Area of the body Feet, legs and colon
Remedy Traffic-light chill-out: whenever you're in the car and you hit a red light, use those moments to take three deep, cleansing breaths. Make it a habit. You won't take any longer to get where you're going, but you might arrive a lot less stressed. Other places you can adopt this ritual include the bus stop, supermarket queues,

waiting for your computer to reboot. Ask yourself these three questions. "Where am I right now?" Here. "Who am I right now?" Myself. "What's the time?" Now.

Second chakra Governs creativity

Area of the body Sexual and reproductive organs

Remedy Washing-up meditation: anything you do with awareness is meditation. Just quietly concentrating on your own breathing is meditation. Chores are a great way of practising. Enjoy the feeling of the warm water on your hands; focus on the colours of the bubbles. Look at each plate or dish. You are making them shiny and new again. You are doing this as an act of love for your family or friends. It may seem a little *Stepford Wives*, but go with it. Just be there in the moment and see how it feels.

Third chakra Governs self-esteem

Area of the body Solar plexus

Remedy Confidence-boosting exercise. Fiennes often suggests the following tip to actors who suffer from stage fright, but it can be used in any situation to banish butterflies in the stomach. Inhale through the nose, then exhale powerfully through the mouth, making a long "Shhhhh" sound. Repeat several times.

Fourth chakra Love

Area of the body Heart

Remedy Kissing-hands ritual. If you want to bring love into your life, lie down on your back with your hands by your side. Slowly bring your left hand to your mouth and kiss it, while visualising receiving love. Then do the same with your right hand, only now imagine giving love, to yourself and others. One woman who did this exercise at a Fiennes workshop met her future husband in the lift on the way out.

I RECENTLY LEARNT HOW TO MEDITATE. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME, BUT EVEN SITTING QUIETLY FOR FIVE MINUTES CAN REALLY HELP

SERENA REES

Fifth chakra Governs communication

Area of the body throat

Remedy Meditation. When you're about to meet someone who annoys you, go to the ladies' just beforehand, inhale through the nose, exhale noisily through the mouth. Repeat 10 times, visualising the person smiling. By the time you see them, you will be too chilled to let them get to you.

Sixth chakra Governs intuition

Area of the body Third-eye point

Remedy Tap into feminine energy by closing your right nostril with your right index finger. Touch your left ring finger to your left thumb. Inhale and exhale to the count of three. Breathing through the left nostril brings in calming, intuitive energy.

Seventh chakra Governs spiritual connection

Area of the body Crown of the head

Remedy School-run mantras. For the most stressful traffic situations, Fiennes recommends playing CDs of mantras in the car and chanting along. "Whenever I give a lift to someone who doesn't know me very well, they say, 'There's something wrong with your CD, it keeps repeating.'" When you feel yourself losing it, stop, acknowledge the feeling and say to yourself, "Okay, I am going to change this."

Yoga for Real Life by Maya Fiennes (Atlantic Books £14.99); mayaspace.com

2 PERFECT YOUR DIGESTION

Bloating and an acid stomach are inevitable consequences of overindulgence, but you can easily get yourself back on track by resurrecting your digestive health. Nutritionists claim that the digestive system is overworked yet often overlooked – until it begins to cause problems.

Digesting and processing food affects everything, from energy levels to our physical and emotional health. Poor digestion stops us absorbing vitamins and minerals and can lead to illness. "During the average lifetime, about 100 tonnes of food pass along the digestive tract and 300,000 litres of digestive juices are produced to break down that food," says the nutritionist Patrick Holford, author of *The 10 Secrets of 100% Healthy People*. "It is a colossal operation. You are not what you eat, you are what you can digest and absorb." Simple practices such as chewing food properly can ease the strain on the gut. "Enzymes in saliva help to break down carbohydrates, so keep chewing until food is a liquid mush in your mouth."

Visitors to the exclusive Viva Mayr Centre, in Austria, are given spelt bread to practise repetitive chewing, but any high-fibre food (or day-old bread) will do. Timing of meals is also crucial, says Dr Harald Stossier, medical director of the clinic. Our digestive systems run to a 12-hour cycle, and most of us "eat too much, too late in the day". Because digestion slows during the day, eating a big meal after 6pm is inadvisable as food remains partly undigested, carbohydrates start to ferment in the gut and proteins begin to putrefy.

Good digestion is also about choosing gut-friendly substances that should "comprise two-thirds alkaline foods – vegetables, ripe fruits, milk and cold-pressed vegetable oils – and only one-third acid foods: animal and vegetable protein, processed and refined foods, legumes, coffee and alcohol".

If you suffer from bloating, you may have an intolerance. To test, get a home kit (from yorktest.com), or keep a diary and avoid foods that don't agree with you; frequent offenders are wheat, milk and yeast. Digestive enzymes or probiotics can kick-start your gut: research by the British Nutrition Foundation suggests gut-friendly supplements and drinks can help with digestive complaints.

**FRUIT IS THE NEW DRUGS:
I'D EAT AN APPLE IN A
CLUB, NO PROBLEM**
MR HUDSON

TOP TIPS TO GET YOUR GUT IN SHAPE

- 1 Start every day with a cup of warm, boiled water to cleanse and hydrate your system. Add Epsom salts for a really thorough cleanse, says Dr Harald Stossier.
- 2 Avoid or reduce foods that are bad for your gut, including wheat, sugar, salt and milk.
- 3 Ease a bloated or gurgling stomach with digestive enzymes, says Patrick Holford. Try alpha-galactosidase after pulses or glucoamylase after cabbage or sprouts. Heal a digestive tract after illness or overindulgence with glutamine or a course of probiotics. Totally Nourish (www.totallynourish.com), BioCare (biocare.co.uk), and Solgar (solgar-vitamins.co.uk) all stock extensive ranges.
- 4 Go raw: eating raw foods, such as uncooked fruit and vegetables, before a main meal can help to prime your digestive system. However, they should only be eaten before 4pm, as they are tough to digest.
- 5 Eat soft fruits, such as melons, nectarines and berries, as between-meal snacks, not as a dessert. They ferment easily and could upset digestion, says Holford.

**I DETOX TWICE A YEAR,
I STAY AWAY FROM REFINED
SUGAR AND WHEAT, AND
TAKE A LOT OF SUPPLEMENTS**
GEORGINA GOODMAN

3 SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS

Nutritional supplements are an insurance policy: take them regularly and they will keep you healthy, strong and even enhance your beauty. "Think about the anatomy of the skin," says Dr Howard Murad, who has pioneered the use of beauty supplements. "The dermis, where the topical solution goes, makes up just 20%; below that is epidermis, and then fat. These lower levels can only be reached by what you put in your body."

However, with so many on the market, which to take? So far, beauty supplements have focused on the one-tablet-does-all idea for the enhancement of skin, hair and nails, but we're starting to see a marked growth in supplements designed to tackle more specific beauty dilemmas. Take Dr Nicholas Perricone, a research dermatologist who recently launched his Pigment Corrective System, which contains a unique plant extract with antioxidising properties that help to "combat the oxidative stress involved in the over-production of skin pigments".

How many daily vitamins and minerals we need is widely debated among nutrition professionals. The UK Food Standards Agency suggests we can get all the nutrients we need from food and sets its recommended daily amounts at the minimum needed for wellbeing; yet experts such as Holford point to research that suggests supplementing the diet with some nutrients helps fight the ageing process and disease. Here are his recommendations:

- 1 Essential omega-3 fat supplement, containing at least 600mg of EPA, DPA and DHA. Omega-3 fats reduce your chances of heart attack, keep the skin moisturised and can reduce aggression.
- 2 Vitamin C: the best value for money is a supplement that also contains herbs and nutrients known to boost immunity, such as echinacea, ginger and zinc. "Ideally, you need 2,000mg vitamin C a day," Holford says. "That's 200mg from fruit and veg and 1,800mg from a supplement."
- 3 Multivitamin and mineral: "You can't get enough of all the necessary nutrients in one tablet, and the water-soluble vitamins B and C are flushed out of the body in four to six hours, so need to be taken twice daily," he says. "A good standard supplement provides 100mg magnesium, 10mg zinc, 25mcg each of selenium and chromium, and at least 10mcg vitamin D a day."

The 10 Secrets of 100% Healthy People by Patrick Holford (Little, Brown £12.99); patrickholford.com

TOP FIVE BEAUTY SUPPLEMENTS

- 1 Imedeen Time Perfection. Created for the 40-plus age group, these tablets contain a selection of antioxidants and vitamins, and claim to reset the skin's moisture balance and visibly reduce fine lines in 12 weeks. £38.50 for 60 tablets; imedeen.co.uk
- 2 Dr Murad Youth Builder. A patented formula with glucosamine and amino acids designed to boost collagen. Clinical research shows it increases skin elasticity by 18%. £44.50; 020 7843 9060
- 3 BeautyScoop. A drinkable powder (to maximise absorption) containing peptides and lipids, the building blocks for healthy skin and hair. Clinical trials back up its efficacy. £136, from Harvey Nichols
- 4 Perfectil Plus. This hugely popular beauty supplement (Britain's No 1) combines essential fatty acids to hydrate the skin with lycopene and lutein to help create a barrier against UV damage. £16.95 for one month's supply, from Boots
- 5 Viridian Ultimate Beauty Complex. A reasonably priced two-a-day formula that fuses vitamins, minerals and vita-nutrients to help maintain collagen in the skin. £8.75; lovelula.com

NEXT WEEK Rules 4 to 6: How to recover your energy, get the past out of your present and measure your H score

A happier, healthier, slimmer you for 2010

Combining the latest knowledge from the world's experts, over the next three weeks we've a ten-point plan to get you into shape



By: Edwina Ings-Chambers

It's time to get holistic about your health. Not just because it's January and time for new resolutions, and not just because the release of the movie of the international bestseller *Eat, Pray, Love* will have us all feeling the need to get some spiritual speed in our lives.

No, holistic health is important because it is not just about how the body works, it's about understanding how our minds and emotional selves play a part in keeping us healthy.

Over the next three weeks, we will outline a brilliant 10-point plan to get you physically and emotionally to a place of genuine wellbeing. We will show you how to recover your energy, how to stop your past from holding you back, and how to measure your homocysteine levels, a key to good health that most of us have never heard of.

We will also have a special issue on how to concentrate on you: how to find "me" time, how to feel strong and confident in yourself, how to find a purpose in life and how to exercise smart. Mental health is just as important as physical health when it comes to how we feel and how we look, and once we're physically and mentally healthy, everything we wish for in life has a way of coming true.

Alongside all of this, we will feature delicious recipes from the Nordic Diet, a diet for life that's not about punishing yourself and cutting back on calories but about guiding you to eating healthy, but scrumptious, food, the kind your body actually needs to function at its optimal level.

To kick it off, we're focusing on the fundamentals. We look at how to get your gut working properly, because what your body digests and absorbs affects your energy, your life span and your state of mind, as well as your general health; how to relax properly, with exclusive tips from the LA guru everyone is talking about; and which health and beauty supplements you should choose from the thousands on offer. We also introduce you to the best foods for good digestion and to protect against ageing. This new year, there really could be a whole new you — we'll drink (two litres of water a day) to that.

1: LEARN TO RELAX

According to the yoga guru Maya Fiennes, learning to chill out is one of the most powerful ways to reinvent yourself. “Relaxation is key to creating a happier, healthier self,” she says. “For most women, there is just too much going on, not just physically, but in our heads as well. Our minds are on overload. If you learn to breathe properly and focus on the present moment, you will find it easier to tap into your intuition, that little voice that tells you what it is that would really make you happy.”

A former classical pianist, Fiennes, who has been dubbed the Nigella of relaxation, has developed a celebrity following in LA, where she lives with her music-producer husband, Magnus (brother of the actors Ralph and Joseph). It’s not hard to see why she is in such demand — she offers strategies that anyone can try without having to check into an ashram.

Fiennes’s tips are startlingly new because they are quick and maximise those dead zones of time — queuing in the supermarket, sitting in traffic or waiting for the computer to do its thing. They are based on balancing the chakras, the seven power centres of the body. And the good news is, you can access this energy without contorting your limbs or standing on your head.

Chakra-balancing on the go

First chakra Governs confidence and security

Area of the body Feet, legs and colon

Remedy Traffic-light chill-out: whenever you’re in the car and you hit a red light, use those moments to take three deep, cleansing breaths. Make it a habit. You won’t take any longer to get where you’re going, but you might arrive a lot less stressed. Other places you can adopt this ritual include the bus stop, supermarket queues, waiting for your computer to reboot. Ask yourself these three questions. “Where am I right now?” Here. “Who am I right now?” Myself. “What’s the time?” Now.

Second chakra Governs creativity

Area of the body Sexual and reproductive organs

Remedy Washing-up meditation: anything you do with awareness is meditation. Just quietly concentrating on your own breathing is meditation. Chores are a great way of practising. Enjoy the feeling of the warm water on your hands; focus on the colours of the bubbles. Look at each plate or dish. You are making them shiny and new again. You are doing this as an act of love for your family or friends. It may seem a little Stepford Wives, but go with it. Just be there in the moment and see how it feels.

Third chakra Governs self-esteem

Area of the body Solar plexus

Remedy Confidence-boosting exercise. Fiennes often suggests the following tip to actors who suffer from stage fright, but it can be used in any situation to banish butterflies in the stomach. Inhale through the nose, then exhale powerfully through the mouth, making a long “Shhhhh” sound. Repeat several times.

Fourth chakra Love

Area of the body Heart

Remedy Kissing-hands ritual. If you want to bring love into your life, lie down on your back with your hands by your side. Slowly bring your left hand to your mouth and kiss it, while visualising receiving

love. Then do the same with your right hand, only now imagine giving love, to yourself and others. One woman who did this exercise at a Fiennes workshop met her future husband in the lift on the way out.

Fifth chakra Governs communication

Area of the body Throat

Remedy Meditation. When you're about to meet someone who annoys you, go to the ladies' just beforehand, inhale through the nose, exhale noisily through the mouth. Repeat 10 times, visualising the person smiling. By the time you see them, you will be too chilled to let them get to you.

Sixth chakra Governs intuition

Area of the body Third-eye point

Remedy Tap into feminine energy by closing your right nostril with your right index finger. Touch your left ring finger to your left thumb. Inhale and exhale to the count of three. Breathing through the left nostril brings in calming, intuitive energy.

Seventh chakra Governs spiritual connection

Area of the body Crown of the head

Remedy School-run mantras. For the most stressful traffic situations, Fiennes recommends playing CDs of mantras in the car and chanting along. "Whenever I give a lift to someone who doesn't know me very well, they say, 'There's something wrong with your CD, it keeps repeating.'" When you feel yourself losing it, stop, acknowledge the feeling and say to yourself, "Okay, I am going to change this."

Yoga for Real Life by Maya Fiennes (Atlantic Books £14.99); mayaspace.com

2: PERFECT YOUR DIGESTION

Bloating and an acid stomach are inevitable consequences of overindulgence, but you can easily get yourself back on track by resurrecting your digestive health. Nutritionists claim that the digestive system is overworked yet often overlooked — until it begins to cause problems.

Digesting and processing food affects everything, from energy levels to our physical and emotional health. Poor digestion stops us absorbing vitamins and minerals and can lead to illness. "During the average lifetime, about 100 tonnes of food pass along the digestive tract and 300,000 litres of digestive juices are produced to break down that food," says the nutritionist Patrick Holford, author of *The 10 Secrets of 100% Healthy People*.

"It is a colossal operation. You are not what you eat, you are what you can digest and absorb." Simple practices such as chewing food properly can ease the strain on the gut. "Enzymes in saliva help to break down carbohydrates, so keep chewing until food is a liquid mush in your mouth."

Visitors to the exclusive Viva Mayr Centre, in Austria, are given spelt bread to practise repetitive chewing, but any high-fibre food (or day-old bread) will do. Timing of meals is also crucial, says Dr Harald Stossier, medical director of the clinic. Our digestive systems run to a 12-hour cycle, and most of us "eat too much, too late in the day". Because digestion slows during the day, eating a big meal after 6pm is inadvisable as food remains partly undigested, carbohydrates start to ferment in the gut and proteins begin to putrefy.

Good digestion is also about choosing gut-friendly substances that should “comprise two-thirds alkaline foods — vegetables, ripe fruits, milk and cold-pressed vegetable oils — and only one-third acid foods: animal and vegetable protein, processed and refined foods, legumes, coffee and alcohol”.

If you suffer from bloating, you may have an intolerance. To test, get a home kit (from yorktest.com), or keep a diary and avoid foods that don't agree with you; frequent offenders are wheat, milk and yeast. Digestive enzymes or probiotics can kick-start your gut: research by the British Nutrition Foundation suggests gut-friendly supplements and drinks can help with digestive complaints.

3: SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS

Nutritional supplements are an insurance policy: take them regularly and they will keep you healthy, strong and even enhance your beauty. “Think about the anatomy of the skin,” says Dr Howard Murad, who has pioneered the use of beauty supplements. “The dermis, where the topical solution goes, makes up just 20%; below that is epidermis, and then fat. These lower levels can only be reached by what you put in your body.”

However, with so many on the market, which to take? So far, beauty supplements have focused on the one-tablet-does-all idea for the enhancement of skin, hair and nails, but we're starting to see a marked growth in supplements designed to tackle more specific beauty dilemmas. Take Dr Nicholas Perricone, a research dermatologist who recently launched his Pigment Corrective System, which contains a unique plant extract with antioxidising properties that help to “combat the oxidative stress involved in the overproduction of skin pigments”.

How many daily vitamins and minerals we need is widely debated among nutrition professionals. The UK Food Standards Agency suggests we can get all the nutrients we need from food and sets its recommended daily amounts at the minimum needed for wellbeing; yet experts such as Holford point to research that suggests supplementing the diet with some nutrients helps fight the ageing process and disease. Here are his recommendations:

1 Essential omega-3 fat supplement, containing at least 600mg of EPA, DPA and DHA. Omega-3 fats reduce your chances of heart attack, keep the skin moisturised and can reduce aggression.

2 Vitamin C: the best value for money is a supplement that also contains herbs and nutrients known to boost immunity, such as echinacea, ginger and zinc. “Ideally, you need 2,000mg vitamin C a day,” Holford says. “That's 200mg from fruit and veg and 1,800mg from a supplement.”

3 Multivitamin and mineral: “You can't get enough of all the necessary nutrients in one tablet, and the water-soluble vitamins B and C are flushed out of the body in four to six hours, so need to be taken twice daily,” he says. “A good standard supplement provides 100mg magnesium, 10mg zinc, 25mcg each of selenium and chromium, and at least 10mcg vitamin D a day.”

The 10 Secrets of 100% Healthy People by Patrick Holford (Little, Brown £12.99); patrickholford.com

TOP TIPS TO GET YOUR GUT IN SHAPE

1) Start every day with a cup of warm, boiled water to cleanse and hydrate your system. Add Epsom salts for a really thorough cleanse, says Dr Harald Stossier.

2) Avoid or reduce foods that are bad for your gut, including wheat, sugar, salt and milk.

3) Ease a bloated or gurgling stomach with digestive enzymes, says Patrick Holford. Try alpha-galactosidase after pulses or glucoamylase after cabbage or sprouts. Heal a digestive tract after illness or overindulgence with glutamine or a course of probiotics. Totally Nourish

(www.totallynourish.com), BioCare (biocare.co.uk), and Solgar (solgar-vitamins.co.uk) all stock extensive ranges.

4) Go raw: eating raw foods, such as uncooked fruit and vegetables, before a main meal can help to prime your digestive system. However, they should only be eaten before 4pm, as they are tough to digest.

5) Eat soft fruits, such as melons, nectarines and berries, as between-meal snacks, not as a dessert. They ferment easily and could upset digestion, says Holford.

TOP FIVE BEAUTY SUPPLEMENTS

1) Imedeen Time Perfection. Created for the 40-plus age group, these tablets contain a selection of antioxidants and vitamins, and claim to reset the skin's moisture balance and visibly reduce fine lines in 12 weeks. £38.50 for 60 tablets; imedeen.co.uk

2) Dr Murad Youth Builder. A patented formula with glucosamine and amino acids designed to boost collagen. Clinical research shows it increases skin elasticity by 18%. £44.50; 020 7843 9060

3) BeautyScoop. A drinkable powder (to maximise absorption) containing peptides and lipids, the building blocks for healthy skin and hair. Clinical trials back up its efficacy. £136, from Harvey Nichols

4) Perfectil Plus. This hugely popular beauty supplement (Britain's No 1) combines essential fatty acids to hydrate the skin with lycopene and lutein to help create a barrier against UV damage. £16.95 for one month's supply, from Boots

5) Viridian Ultimate Beauty Complex. A reasonably priced two-a-day formula that fuses vitamins, minerals and vita-nutrients to help maintain collagen in the skin. £8.75; lovelula.com