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Woman's Own



Davina

'Women over 50 still enjoy orgasms'



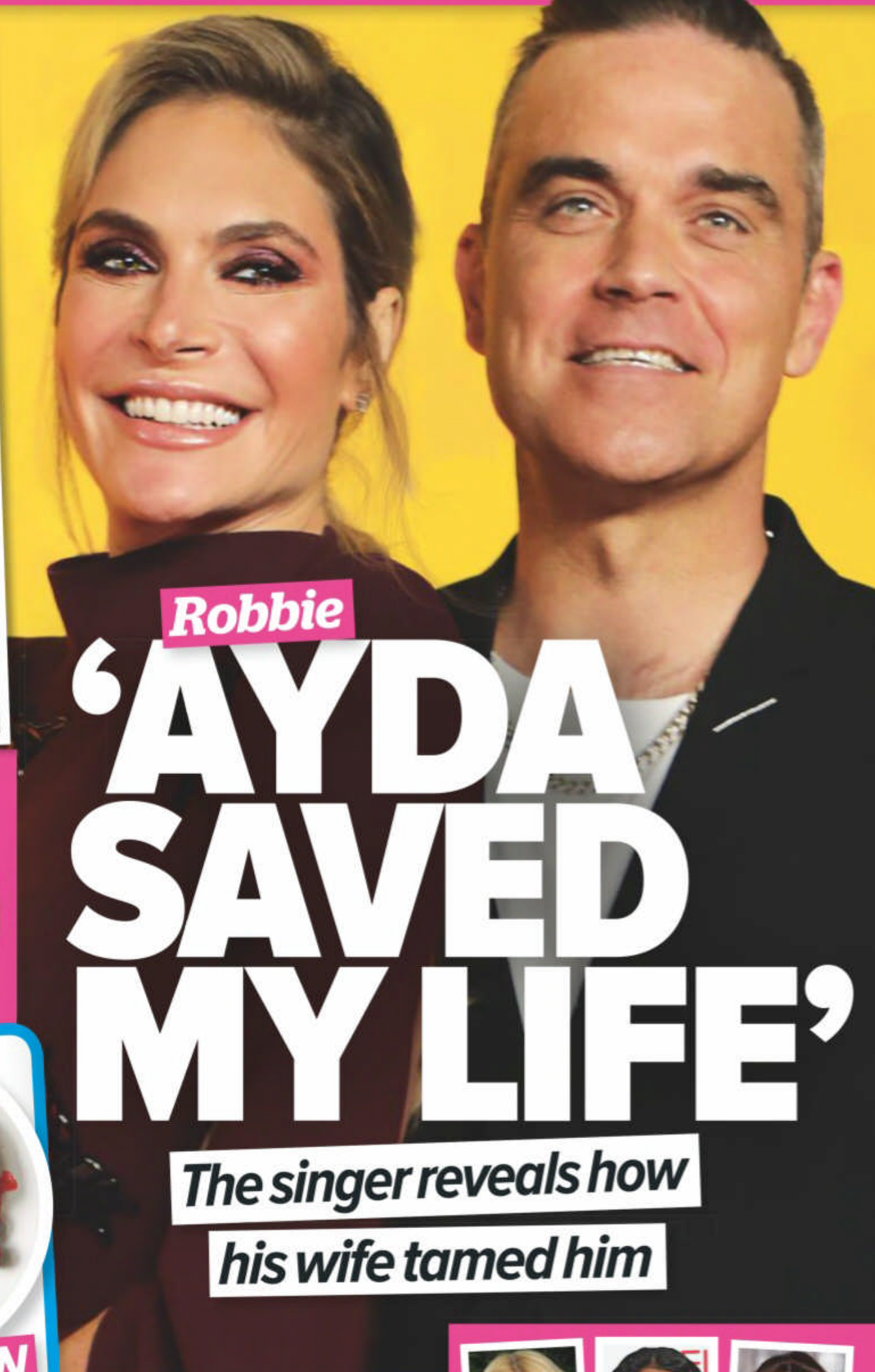
I gave three strangers THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT



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Robbie

'AYDA SAVED MY LIFE'

The singer reveals how his wife tamed him

12 ways to WOW



Style on a budget



Their beauty faves revealed

Secrets from THE STARS

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This week we're loving

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF

The Great British Bake Off will be back on our screens this week, with 12 new home bakers competing to become the 2020 winner.

The series has been filming at a new Essex location, with cast and crew tested for COVID-19 to make sure the hit C4 show could be made safely during the pandemic.

Since 2017, when the show moved from

the BBC to C4, it has been presented by Noel Fielding and Sandi Toksvig, but for the new season, *Little Britain* star Matt Lucas will be joining Noel in the tent, after Sandi stepped down earlier this year.

Paul Hollywood and Prue Leith will return as show judges. Welcome back, *Bake Off*!

● Tuesday, C4

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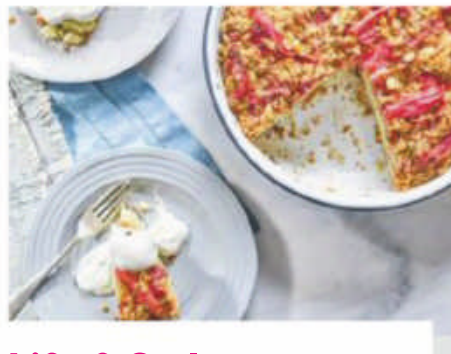
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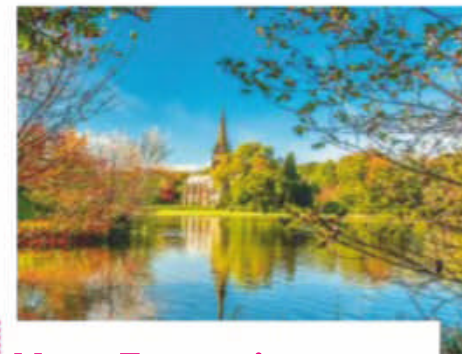
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RICHARD ARNOLD'S

week in showbiz

Jack P Shepherd

'It's just great fun going into work'

Corrie's Jack P Shepherd celebrates 20 years on the famous street!

Twenty years on the Cobbles for you – I've known you man and boy – can you remember your first scene?

It was in Roy's Rolls and I only had a couple of lines but it took me about two weeks to remember them. I said, 'Hello, can I have an Eccles cake?' I don't remember my second scene or the next day or anything, but you always remember your first scene.

You're only 32 and you're a Street icon.

Street icon? Really? I've had some great storylines, tackled lots of issues. I've loved them all – especially the ones with the Platts. It's just great fun going into work every day. The current one with Shona's loss of memory is nice to play, it's a different kind of character for her and for me to play off. There have been 60 years of the show and I've been involved in a third. It's mental!

Do you watch old episodes?

My little boy does, funnily enough. He asks me what I'm like as a kid and you can just go on YouTube and show him. It's me as a 10-year-old and he's six, nearly seven, so he can see his dad. There's hours and hours of footage of me looking just like him. It's mad to think he can see me like that.

With Helen Worth [Gail] as your mum and Sue Nicholls as your gran [Audrey] you must be the most mothered man on Earth!

Yeah, I am! I was with Helen yesterday and she's finding it very strange, as we all are, with the two-metre distance, but luckily we can get by and keep the show going. It's tricky but it's doable.

How was your lockdown?

I didn't mind it. It was nice just to stay home, relax and do things you wouldn't normally do like put that shelf up or write a book that you'll never finish. Did I put that shelf up? No! Did I write that book? Did I 'eck! I kept in touch with the family on Zoom and did quizzes. Oh those quizzes, they went on didn't they?

Everybody was in good health, though, so it was fine for me.

You've got two-metre sticks keeping you all apart – have you been beaten by one yet?

I have had the stick in my face! They are needed because you do forget, but it's going well. We've been back since June and had no cases yet.

Corrie's 60th anniversary is in December... What's in store?

A few stories that are woven together, so not one particular story. I'm pretty sure the Platts will be involved!

● **Coronation Street, Mon, Wed and Fri, ITV**

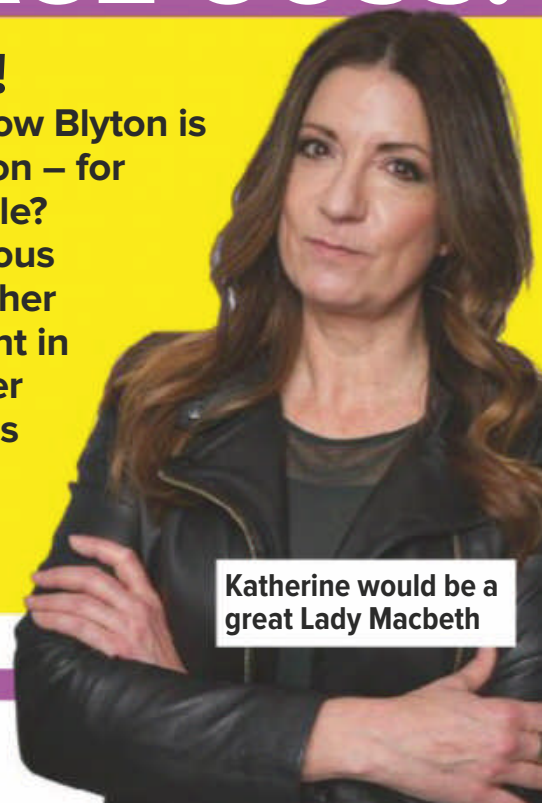


Jack with co-star Julia Goulding

BACKSTAGE GOSS!

TOIL AND TROUBLE!

Emmerdale's Katherine Dow Blyton is harbouring a secret passion – for Shakespeare. The ideal role? 'Lady Macbeth is the obvious one,' she says. Given that her character, Harriet, is caught in a nightmare web of murder and deceit after her ex was shot dead, I can't imagine it would be leap of faith for the Dales vicar!



Katherine would be a great Lady Macbeth

ONE TO WATCH



CHRISTMAS TREAT!

Just when you thought Christmas was cancelled, coming soon: a charity Christmas single for the Alzheimer's Society and Action for Children featuring myself and *GMB* pal Laura Tobin alongside a host of other familiar faces. Happy to report no autotuning was needed, but with so many famous faces on the track my vocals may well be stifled. No ear muffs needed!



The one where Dickie met Jen!

When megastar Jennifer Aniston entered the room for our chat, I said, 'Where the hell have you been?' There was a pause. I continued: 'I've waited over 10 years for this!' To which she responded by calling me a borderline national treasure! Jen was clearly well briefed and we were firm friends – for all of 10 minutes!



Richard's book is set to be a blockbuster

CLUE DUNNIT!

I knew Richard Osman was a towering talent when I was on *Pointless Celebrities* back in 2015. Now his debut novel, *The Thursday Murder Club*, is flying off the shelves and is set to be turned into a film by Steven Spielberg – Richard has revealed he spent his time in lockdown wisely: 'I used the time to complete the sequel, which is great.'



RICH PICKINGS!

Former *BGT* winner Richard Jones gives his verdict on the semi-finalists.



Aaron and Jasmine

My top act this week was the star of the night, the talented dancing couple Aaron and Jasmine – phenomenal. I thought they rivalled any of the professional dancers on *Strictly* and truly lit up the stage. There isn't another act like them in the semi-final and I think they show that if you are disciplined and work hard, you can achieve great things.



Souparnika Nair

Next is 'souper' singer Souparnika Nair, who was such a crowd-pleaser. Not only did she have a wonderful voice, she was so

animated and seemed to bring life to the lyrics as she sang. She'll only get better as she gets older so she's set to become a real star.

Damien O'Brien

And lastly, magician Damien O'Brien. His performance was smooth and though I'm sure he was nervous, he didn't show it. His clever notepad trick with Ashley, which ended in the word 'incredible', was exactly that. All the magicians this series have been impressive and I'm glad magic is being represented so strongly.



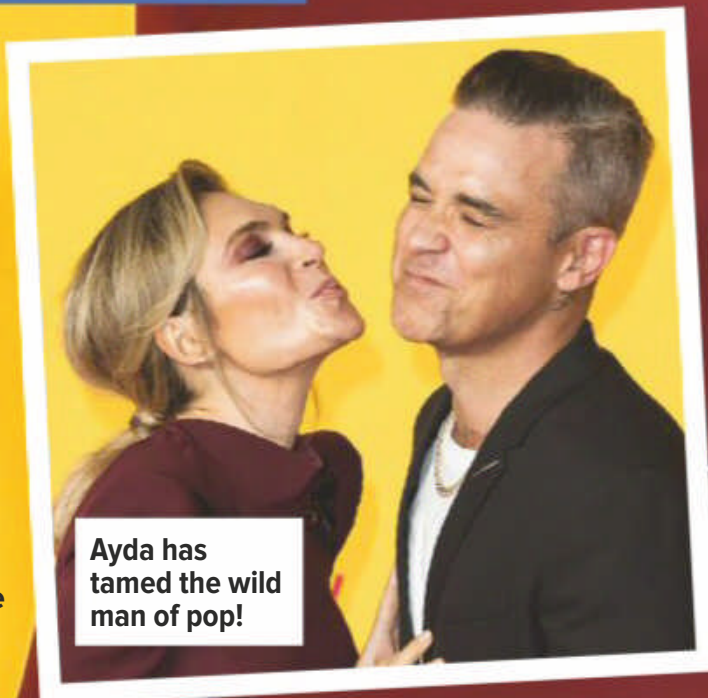
ROBBIE

‘Ayda SAVED my life’

Robbie Williams reveals how his wife came into his life at just the right time

Before settling down with Ayda Field, Robbie Williams was known as Take That’s resident ‘bad boy’. After quitting the band in 1995, Robbie soon went off the rails and spent time in rehab for drug and alcohol addiction.

But meeting Ayda, 41, on a blind date in 2006 changed him. As Robbie, 46, puts it, ‘Ayda is my rock, she’s looked after me through thick and thin.’ The couple tied the knot in 2010 and are parents to Theodora, seven, Charlton, five, Colette, two, and seven-month-old Beau. We look at how Ayda tamed rebel Robbie...



Ayda has tamed the wild man of pop!

AYDA’S ULTIMATUM

Robbie has been a smoker for most of his adult life and has struggled with his weight. But with Ayda’s encouragement and support, he managed to get his health back in check.

He said of his lifestyle change, ‘There’s the relentless weight battle I’ve had forever, but the most recent thing that triggered this whole thing –



The couple tied the knot in 2010

I relapsed on smoking.’

He added, ‘The wife said, “You’ve got to give up smoking, January 1st.”

‘In May that sounded like a good deal and also I didn’t want to do the early death, then it got to November and Ayda was like, “Remember January 1st!” And my toes curled – but I thought, hang on, maybe I can view this differently.

‘Not only could I give up



‘I’m with the person I want to spend eternity with’

smoking, but I could be fit, healthy and have a clean head and clean vision of how I want my future, and I found that moment to be very powerful.’

Robbie – who is now a WW ambassador – added, ‘January came and the smoking stopped and I started boxing, but it wasn’t until April that I started to do it properly. So instead of picking up Cadbury, I cut up a couple of oranges, put them in the fridge, had them cold and it satisfied my sweet tooth.’

LIFE OR DEATH

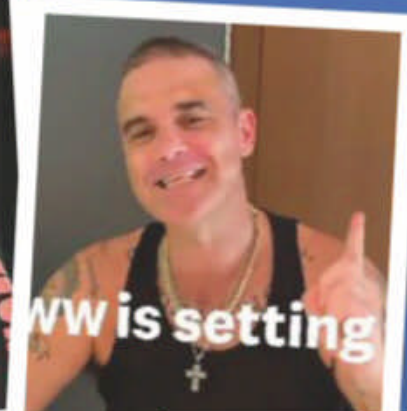
Robbie’s new lifestyle was desperately needed after years of abusing his body – and he is certain that if Ayda hadn’t supported him with his journey, he wouldn’t be here today.

‘Normally my history is being overweight and being dreadfully unhappy, then counteracting that with extreme measures and being depressed because there’s no nutrients in my body, which is why I started smoking,’ he admitted.

‘I basically lived on fresh air, broth



He had struggled with his weight for years...



...but is now trim, fit and healthy

and some mango. This thing with food can literally be a life or death thing. And it’s those things you trick yourself into doing that could end your life early. I knew I had to take action or I was going to die.

‘I seem to have found a middle way. This is the best I’ve been solidly for a long time.’

A ROCKY START

Ayda came into Robbie’s life when he was at rock bottom. The pair were introduced by a mutual friend in 2006 and their first date was at Robbie’s LA mansion. But before meeting his future wife, Robbie had vowed never to get married or have children. ‘I have a long history of mental illness with depression and agoraphobia, so having children would have been like passing me a human to hold when I was drowning. Why on earth would I want that?’ he said.

Ayda said about his home at the time, ‘The energy was weird, Rob was like a Dickensian pop star holed up in his mansion. The house was dark, it didn’t feel like a home. It was quite sad.’

They headed to a party and hit it off, although for the first three years of their relationship, Robbie ended it with Ayda three times. But it was bumping into Hollywood actor Cameron Diaz that made him realise he wanted Ayda back in his life for good.

He recalled, ‘I started talking about



The loved-up pair having fun at home



Robbie is now a happy family man

this person I’d just ended a relationship with and was listing all these things about her brilliance when Cameron said, “I don’t think it’s over.”

‘At that moment the universe spoke to me. I left and went straight to Ayda’s house and committed to her. I’m monogamous and I’m with the person I want to spend eternity with.’

Now that’s a love story!

A full-length portrait of Davina McCall, a woman with long dark hair, smiling and wearing a bright yellow, one-shoulder, long-sleeved dress. She is standing against a solid pink background.

‘Women can still

Davina McCall opens up on why she’s having the time of her life and feeling ‘foxy’ than ever at the age of 52...

There’s no denying that Davina McCall looks amazing; the TV presenter has a figure that women half her age would kill for, which she’s worked hard to achieve over the years.

But despite claiming she doesn’t look as good naked as she did in her 20s, Davina admits she’s feeling ‘foxy’ than ever at the age of 52, and confesses she’s still having good sex!

Speaking to *Women’s Health*, she said, ‘Women over 50 feel sexy, we can dress sexily and we can wear underwear and we still enjoy orgasms.

‘People say, “Oh, it’s all gone... menopause... you’re finished with your wizened, dried-up ovaries.”’

She added, ‘I feel like it’s really important to say that people in their 50s are having the time of their lives.

‘I don’t look as good naked as I did in my 20s. But I feel better, and that’s the difference. I walk around like a foxy minx because I feel like a foxy minx.’

‘I walk around like a foxy minx now!’



The TV star split from hubby Matthew in 2017

over 50 feel SEXY!

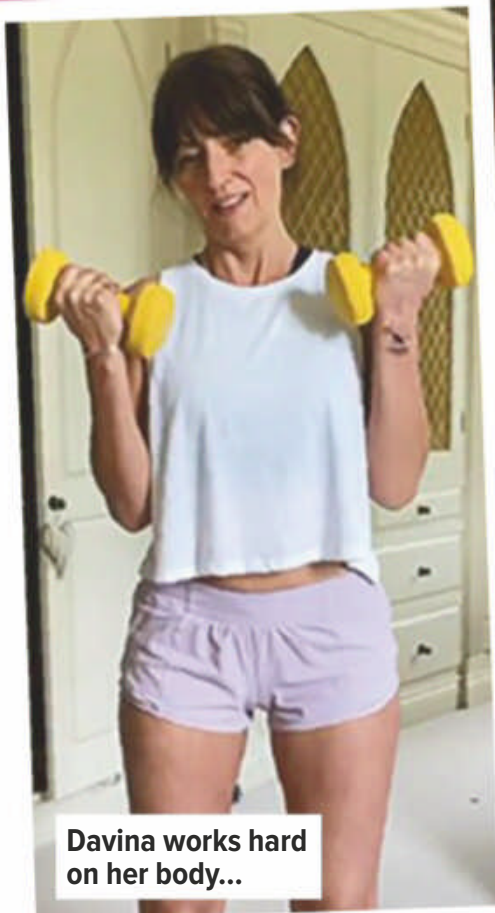
DEALING WITH THE MENOPAUSE

Davina's positive feelings about her body come after she suffered with confusion and memory loss while going through the dreaded menopause.

She explained, 'My phone was in the fridge and my keys were in the bin. My night sweats became so bad, I just never slept through. I couldn't read an autocue.'

However, the effects of menopause subsided as soon as Davina had hormone replacement therapy.

'From the minute I put the little patch on – boom, sleep. Oh my God, the joy. I felt like I was back,' she added.



Davina works hard on her body...



...and shows off her killer abs in a bikini!

'MY DIVORCE DIET'

The past few years have been a period of change for Davina, having split from her husband, Matthew Robertson, in 2017, after 17 years together.

The TV star – who shares children Holly, 19, Tilly, 17, and Chester, 14, with Matthew – lost a lot of weight after the break-up and she's now opened up on how that made her feel.

'It's called the divorce diet,' she said. 'Where you just literally shed [weight]. It happens to so many people. It was nothing I did. I was just running on adrenaline.'

WORDS: HAYLEY MINN. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, INSTAGRAM @DAVINAMCCALL

MOVING ON

Davina is now dating hairdresser and friend Michael Douglas – who she's previously said has been 'like a therapist' to her.

Michael has been cutting Davina's hair for years and, speaking on their podcast, *Making The Cut*, he explained how he likes to lift people's spirits by having a natter over a blow-dry.

'It's one of the great perks of the job, cheering people up,' he said. 'There's something very nice about that, because I get the after-effects.'

Davina agreed, 'Having been in the chair while you do my hair, it is like therapy. You therapied me for many, many, years!'

However, Davina and Michael struggled to speak to each other while isolating apart throughout lockdown.

She previously said, 'Now we're in different households, so we're trying new things like recording together on Zoom.'

'We'll do a video podcast together and also an Instagram Live. It's funny because Michael and I struggle to talk when we're on the phone now, because we try to save everything for our podcast.'

Let's hope that, with lockdown loosened, Michael and Davina are able to spice things up again!

Davina has now found love with Michael



WHO WORE

Our fashion team reveal which stars



Sienna Miller, 38

Actor and model Sienna wows in a statement coat. The bright style means it can be a transition piece, working across all seasons to perfection.



Margot Robbie, 30

Make like Margot and go for timeless navy checks. The actor styles her floor-sweeping gown with lashings of gold accessories, a chic up-do and a winning smile.



Taylor Swift, 30

With a new album under her fashionable belt, singer and UK-fan Taylor Swift shows how to do top-to-toe pattern. Matchy-matchy outfits are a key look this season.

IT BEST?

really nailed the look



Zara Tindall, 39

Styling a coat as a dress is a go-to when it comes to royal style. Zara Tindall shows how it's done with a houndstooth check cover-up and coordinating berry accessories.



The Duchess of Cornwall, 73

Camilla looks effortlessly stylish in a grid-check shirt dress. The contrasting collar and structured shape is so flattering on her – no accessories needed with this beauty.

Checks

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From one m to another

With her family complete, Leanne Armstrong, 39, was able to give three strangers the most precious gift of all

As I came round from the medication that had accompanied the emergency caesarean, my half-opened eyes instinctively darted towards the incubator at my bedside. Swaddled in a tiny blanket was my baby girl, Elise, who was just five hours old. 'Hello, beautiful girl,' I cried. My mum had always told me that the love you feel for your child is like no other. And as I cradled my newborn in my arms for the very first time that day in January 2004, I realised just how right she was.

I'd always wanted to be a mother, and when my then-husband and I welcomed Elise, she brought us so much joy. I was obsessed with her, and loved every second together. 'I miss her already,' I'd joke whenever she was asleep. When my son, Nyle, followed a few years later, in January 2009, I knew my little family was complete. I relished watching the children grow up and hit milestones, like their first steps and their first words. But later in 2009, I realised that becoming a mother was something that not every woman is lucky enough to experience.

While driving to my funeral-director job one morning, I heard something on the radio about egg donation, encouraging women to donate

their eggs in order to help others to become mothers. I'd been able to fall pregnant with such ease both times that up until now I hadn't even considered that some women were unable to have children without help. I thought about the moments I'd held Elise and Nyle for the first time and the incredible love I'd felt for

them both. 'If I could bring that same joy and love to another woman, I should do it,' I told my then-husband later that night.

'If it's what you want to do, then I'll support you,' he agreed. By now, Elise was seven, and I wanted to be honest with her about my decision, so I informally sat her down to explain the process. 'So you're helping ladies have babies?' she asked.

'That's right,' I smiled. I was thrilled that

Elise continued to bombard me with questions, asking how it all worked and how long it would take.

I made sure that I researched everything thoroughly online and got support from the team at UK egg-donation charity Altrui, but there was nothing that swayed my decision.

'I wanted to give another woman that same joy'



Meeting Nyle as a newborn

There'd be no payment for donating my eggs, only expense costs. But it wasn't about the money for me – all I wanted was to give another woman the same joy that my children had given me.

Getting the ball rolling

In early 2010, I was ready to start the process and went to my local fertility clinic filled with excitement. I had tests to determine if I could pass on hereditary conditions, as well as counselling to make sure I understood what I was doing. I already knew that any baby born from my eggs wouldn't be my child and I didn't feel any sense of attachment to the eggs I was giving away. I saw them as a cluster of cells, rather than a baby, ones which otherwise would go to waste every



She had to have injections and take hormone tablets

mummy



Leanne feels so lucky to have Elise and Nyle

month, because I didn't plan on having any more children myself.

'The egg donation will be anonymous,' the counsellor told me. I'd have no idea who my eggs were going to, nor would the parents know they'd come from me. The counsellor proceeded to tell me that the law around egg donation changed in 2005, meaning when a child born from a donor turns 18, he or she has the right to contact the woman who donated. 'That's fine by me,' I agreed. I knew that if and when that time came, I'd welcome any questions from children I'd helped create.

Six months after my first appointment, I started treatment. I took hormone tablets for 14 days, and then began twice-daily injections into my tummy to stimulate my ovaries into producing eggs. I had no

emotional or physical side effects other than slight bloating. And by the time the day of collection came round in 2010, I was surprised not to feel any nervousness.

The waiting game

'Good luck, Mummy!' Elise said as I left for the clinic that morning.

My eggs were collected under sedation, in a procedure that took 15 minutes. But there was no pain, in fact, the hardest part was waiting for news to hear if the eggs had resulted in a pregnancy. When I got an email a fortnight later to say they had, I couldn't stop smiling – but, sadly, the woman lost the baby a few weeks later. I really felt for her and I knew I'd donate again, which I did three months later.

'I'd love to meet those children one day'

Again, it resulted in a pregnancy – and, months on, I received some fantastic news from the clinic. 'It's a healthy baby boy,' a nurse said, explaining the woman I'd helped had given birth. It may sound ridiculous because I'd never met this

woman and had no idea who she was, but I felt so elated for her, I started sobbing. I just sympathised with her struggle to have a baby and how difficult it must have been for her. And I imagined how she must be feeling, holding her little

boy for the first time and feeling that unconditional love.

It made me so emotional and happy that I've now donated six times and my eggs have helped produce two boys and a little girl. At 39, I'm now too old to donate as the cut-off age in the UK is 35. Yet, ever intent on helping women with fertility issues, in 2018 I started volunteering for Altrui, which gives advice to potential donors.

I'd love to meet those three children one day and explain to them why it meant so much to me to play a part in their creation. I have done many things in my life, but giving the gift of life is up there with my greatest achievements yet.



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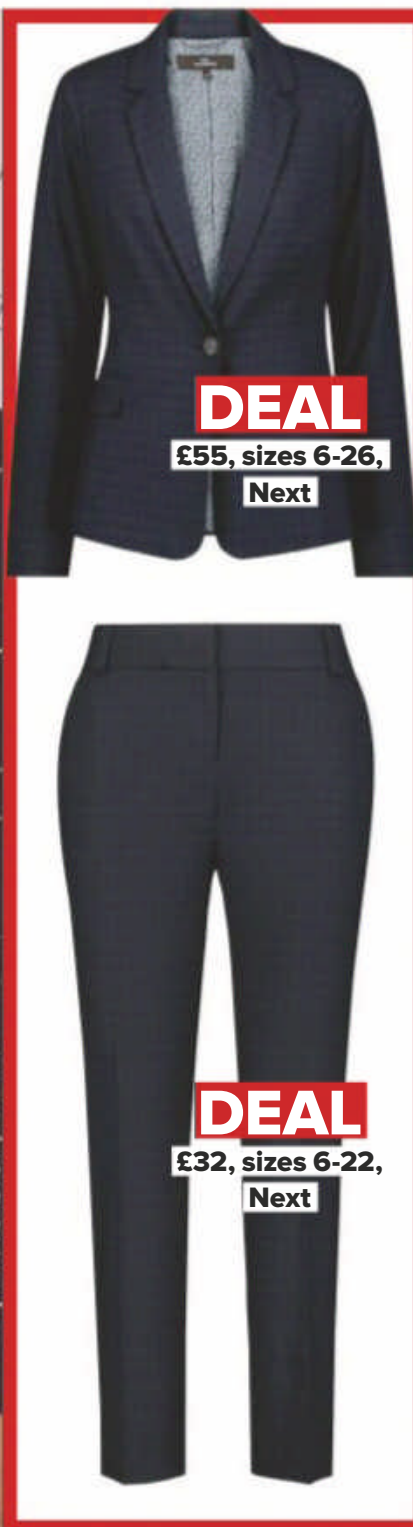


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Fiction became my REALITY

Melanie Clark Pullen, 44, was playing a film role, but real life began to show some similarities

Feeling the studio lights warm my face, I leaned forward and delivered the lines I'd practised so many times before in rehearsals. 'I'm sorry, but you've got breast cancer,' I told the actress, Lesley Manville, as she sat in front of me.

It was July 2018, and as a jobbing actress, I'd had roles in *EastEnders*, *Casualty* and performed in the West End, but I was particularly excited about this role – playing a doctor in the film, *Ordinary Love*, starring Lesley and award-winning actor Liam Neeson as her on-screen husband.

The film was about a middle-aged married couple – Joan and Tom – as they faced a devastating breast-cancer diagnosis, and the many ups and downs it brings. Acting in a film about something that affects so many people carried a huge responsibility. Two members of my family had had breast cancer and a very close friend, too.

Thankfully, they had all survived, but so many of the patients they had become friends with during treatment hadn't, and I felt very privileged to be part of a film depicting what these brave women had to endure. When I wasn't acting, I loved



Losing her hair was tough, but Melanie kept smiling

spending time with my family – husband, Simon, 44, and my three children, Grace, Gabriel and Raphael, aged from four to 10.

A few months after filming had finished, in December 2018, the children were spending the day with Simon's dad, Ivan, then 81, so Simon and I took the rare opportunity to spend some alone time together, including a few hours in bed.

Only, as we prepared to get up, Simon turned to me, a fearful look in his eyes.

'I think I felt a lump,' he whispered, looking down at my chest. 'A lump?' I repeated, touching my breasts and searching. My hand trembled as I felt a hard little lump under my nipple on my right breast.

I tried not to panic and went to see my GP the following day. When he said he suspected a cyst, my mind went into overdrive. That was exactly what my character had initially diagnosed in the film and, of course, in the end it had turned out to be much more sinister.

Getting the results

'It could be the same for me,' I said to Simon as we made our way to Ulster Hospital in Dundonald, Northern Ireland, a few days later.

'You don't know that,' Simon reassured me, and I knew he was right – after all, that was just a scene from a film where drama is purposely heightened, this was real life.

At hospital, I had a morning of tests – a biopsy, mammogram and an ultrasound and, later that day, I was invited into a room for the results.

Clutching Simon's hand on the other side of a desk from a cancer specialist, I took a few deep breaths. 'It is breast cancer,' she said slowly. I felt Simon grip my hand tighter, but, instead of breaking

Melanie in a scene from *Ordinary Love*



During her time back in *EastEnders*



‘I’d gone into acting mode, I was fooling myself’

down, I found myself trying to hide the emotion in my voice. ‘What’s the plan then?’ I asked.

She explained I’d need surgery to remove the 2cm lump, followed by a course of chemotherapy. ‘OK,’ I nodded, turning to smile at Simon. He looked distraught and confused, clearly puzzled by my calm reaction. The fact was, I was in shock, unable to really take in the enormity of what I’d been told.

A few nights on, we sat down with the kids for our usual movie and pizza night, but, before we turned the TV on, I told them. ‘I’ve got a lump in my breast, but I’ll have it removed and it’s going to be fine.’

They nodded silently, worry etched on their faces as I handed them pizza, and I started to wonder if I was fooling myself as well as them. It was as though I’d gone into acting mode, pretending I was playing a part, rather than facing my true emotions. It wasn’t until a month later,

after my operation to remove the lump and lymph nodes, that the reality of my situation really started to dawn on me.

Despite the surgery, doctors told me they could still detect cancer. It was spreading, and conversations turned to more operations and chemotherapy.

‘It’s not going to be an easy fix is it?’ I said, breaking down in Simon’s arms.

‘We’ll get through it,’ he said. But for the first time, I didn’t feel strong any more.

In March, I had more surgery to remove tissue in my breast, and the following month I started chemo, visiting the hospital every few weeks – with Simon or on my own if he was working or had to look after the kids.

Friends, family and the kids did their best to cheer me up when, in April 2019, my bob-length hair became so thin I had to ask my hairdresser to shave it off.

‘For the first time, I didn’t feel so strong’



A supportive family unit was crucial

never been vain about my hair, in fact, sometimes I hated it, but being bald made me feel so unfeminine.

So, not long after getting my head shaved, I got a red bob-length wig and, in an attempt at a bit of humour, I named it Roxy. That May, I had a rare night out – dinner in a Thai restaurant with friends – and by the end of the night, all six of them had taken turns trying on Roxy, while I sat there, tears of laughter rolling down my cheeks, my bald head exposed. For the first time in months, I felt like myself again. Cancer had taken so much from me, but I refused to let it take away my sense of humour and fun.

Taking nothing for granted

By October 2019, I’d finished chemo and was about to start a three-week course of radiotherapy. My hair was growing back, so I dyed it pink and went to the Belfast film screening of *Ordinary Love* with Simon.

Watching the drama unfold on screen was emotional and, at times, unsettling as it mirrored what I’d been going through recently. But it also gave me great comfort in knowing that the film may help others going through a cancer diagnosis.

By now, my treatment seemed to be working and, in January 2020, I had an 11-hour operation to remove and reconstruct both breasts. I also had my fallopian tubes and ovaries removed, having discovered I had the BRCA2 gene mutation that put me at a very high risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Weeks after my operation, I was told I was cancer free, but I’m taking nothing for granted, it could come back any time. I feel so naive for thinking that cancer was something that only happened to other people or in films. Overnight, fiction became my reality, but I’m one of the lucky ones to beat this disease. Now, I’m determined to make every second count.

● **Melanie runs the motivational website strutandbellow.com**

● ***Ordinary Love* is available to buy at amazon.co.uk**



**Discover
your new
season**



Dawn Neesom

MIND OF MY OWN

The *Woman's Own* columnist has her say

How REAL is reality?

Anything we see on social media must be taken with a pinch of salt

The amazing Saira Khan might be a *Loose Woman*, but there's one thing about her that isn't loose... her banging bod. Or her knickers.

We all know this because she 'bravely' posted Instagram pictures of herself wearing gorgeous undies demonstrating how it's so easy to cheat and sell an unrealistic body image on social media.

She did this by breathing in – gorgeous. And breathing out – er, equally gorgeous. Not joking, but I have had Sunday dinners that leave me with a bigger tummy than Saira in her 'after' photo.

I totally get the 50-year-old mum of two's message that all women should be body confident, but when you have suspiciously good hair, make-up, lighting and lingerie in a photo that proves how supposedly relaxed you are about being an ordinary middle-aged mum, some of us start to wobble a bit. Not just our bellies.

Instagram v Reality has been huge since the plastic, not at all fantastic, Kardashian clan started selling us all the dream of a cosmetic surgery nightmare 14 years ago. Make no mistake, NOTHING you see on social media is real.

But even those of us who really should know better – yes, hello me – still get

sucked in by the toned and honed celebrities who know how to use a filter.

Absolutely no implication here at all that Saira has cheated in any way because I've worked with her and can vouch that she is feisty, fun and very fit. But most of our

realities are not like hers.

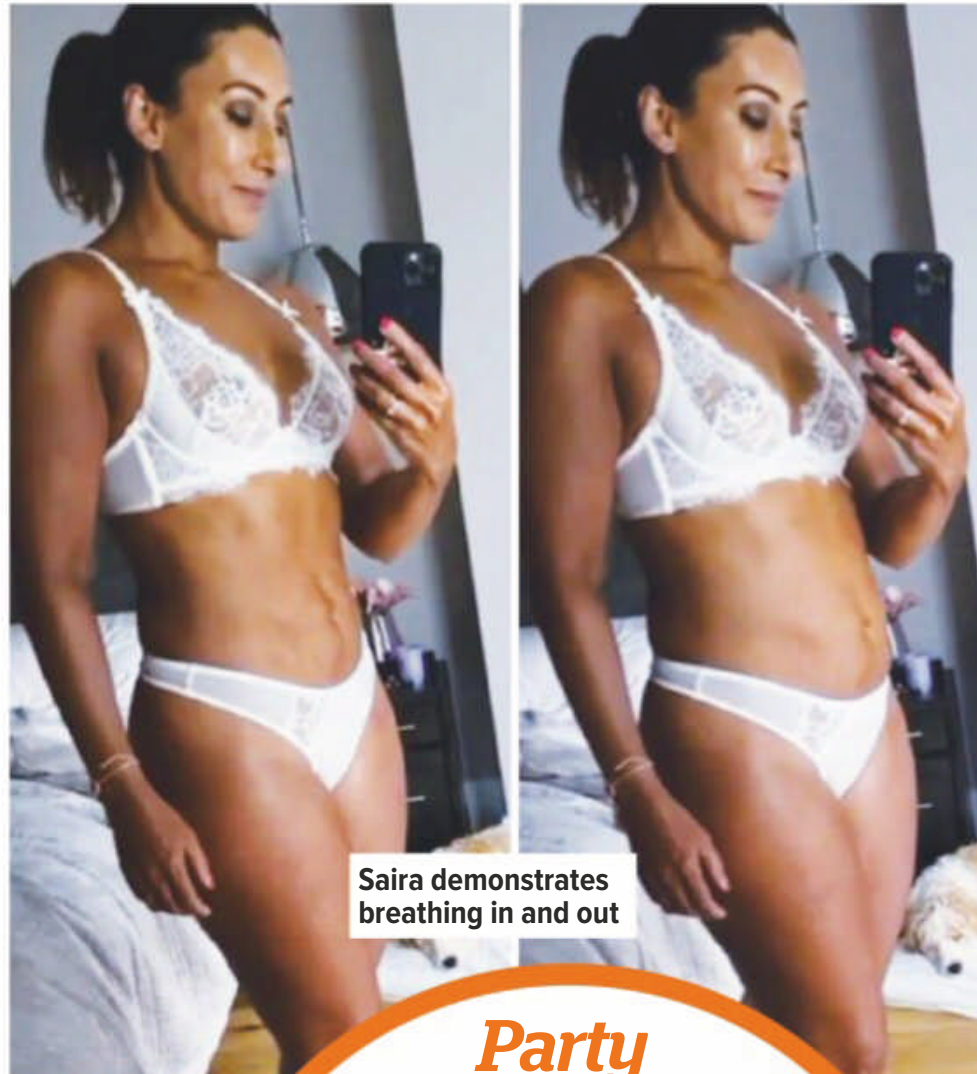
The real defining moment for women accepting our bodies will come when we literally get

up in the morning, sling on a dressing gown and slippers and post a picture. That is reality. That is strength. That is totally accepting US for what we are.

Still, we love Saira none the less because she's at least having a go. And that really is the important message here.

She looks stunning, she is doing her utmost, and in these dark and mad times we need to be grateful for having a body that works, no matter what it looks like.

'People still get sucked in by filters'



Saira demonstrates breathing in and out

Party poopors

So, the Government is threatening to cancel Christmas unless we all 'bubble' in groups of six. This is brilliant news if you're the antisocial type who relishes a solitary sofa slump on the big day, but dreadful if you're in a festive panto such as *Snow White*. Because let's face it, at least two of the dwarves aren't going to be Happy...



Sober October? No chance this year



Tee-total - ish

We are nearly in sober October and even the charities that came up with this idea admit they may be pushing their luck in 2020.

The original idea was to quit booze for the month, donate the proceeds to Macmillan and be healthier. Trouble is, nobody bothered to tell COVID-19.

So to everyone having a go at getting through one of the grimmest months of the year, even in normal times, without a glass of vino, bravo.

Personally, I'll be donating the monetary value of every drink I sup to raise funds – which means cancer should be cured round about the 11th.

What's your opinion? Tell Dawn on Twitter @DawnNeesom



**Discover your
new season**



Dawn Harper

ASK THE DOCTOR

Doctor Dawn Harper answers all your medical questions...

Why should I pay for a medical certificate?

Q I have always wanted to learn to scuba dive. My husband and I have booked a course in Cornwall to celebrate our silver wedding anniversary, and they have asked us to fill in a medical questionnaire, which needs to be signed by our GP. My practice says there will be a fee for this. It is literally just two sides of A4. Is it right for them to charge us?

GPs charge for their time

A I'm afraid so. The NHS doesn't cover these sorts of medical certificates, so GPs charge for their time and also for the responsibility of signing a statement of fitness to dive, which you will have to have before being allowed to do the course.

Stress has worsened my skin condition

Q Can eczema be triggered by stress? I suffered badly as a young woman, and I think it is coming back. My husband lost his job recently and we have been under huge pressure financially. My arms are covered in an itchy rash, which is driving me mad. I wake in the night having made myself bleed with the scratching.

A Eczema can definitely be triggered by stress. Take a photograph of the rash and email it to your doctor, who will

probably prescribe some steroid cream to settle this down. You will also need to keep your skin well hydrated with regular emollient. Keep your fingernails short to reduce the damage to your skin, and you could take an antihistamine at night to reduce the itch.



Keep your nails short

Contact Dr Dawn

Send your questions to drdawn@futurenet.com, follow her on Twitter @DrDawnHarper, or go to drdawn.com

Avoiding time off work for an op

Q My mum had a hysterectomy in her 40s because of fibroids, and I think I may be following suit. My periods are getting heavier and more frequent. I have been putting off seeing my doctor because I am worried about taking time off work. I am a teacher. Can I ask for an operation to be in the holidays?

A Yes. Make an appointment to see your GP, who will examine you and may want to arrange an ultrasound scan. If you need surgery, you can request a date in the holidays, but you may not need a hysterectomy. There are several other options such as an endometrial ablation where just the womb lining is removed, and recovery is much quicker.

Don't suffer in silence



Afraid TO ASK?

Painful knee stops me going to the loo!

Q I have arthritis in my left knee. My surgeon discharged me at the end of 2019, saying he wanted to delay surgery for as long as possible and I should ask my GP to send me back when the pain was keeping me up at night. It isn't, but I am now so stiff that I struggle to get to the toilet in time. Can I ask for a review?

A Yes. Ask for a telephone appointment with your doctor. It is common for orthopaedic surgeons to want to delay knee replacement surgery, but this is clearly having an impact on your quality of life and your surgeon would want to know.



Anita Naik

A PROBLEM SHARED

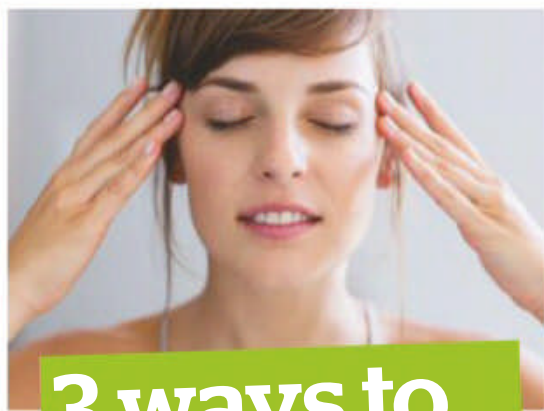
Mum-of-two Anita Naik has been an agony aunt for 28 years

Help! I hate having sex with him

Q In many ways, I have the perfect relationship. My partner is handsome, loving and kind, but sex with him turns me off. He's very soft and feminine in bed, opting for lots of slow touching and kissing. I hate it. I don't know how to tell him I want him to be more masculine without hurting his feelings. We are both in our 40s.

Name and address withheld

A Having different desires to your partner isn't unusual. You both need to be honest, and open to compromise, about what you like in bed. Steer clear of labelling his sexual technique, as this will hurt both his confidence and feelings. Instead, suggest things you'd like more of, and listen to his needs. The more you do this, the faster you'll find the sweet spot.

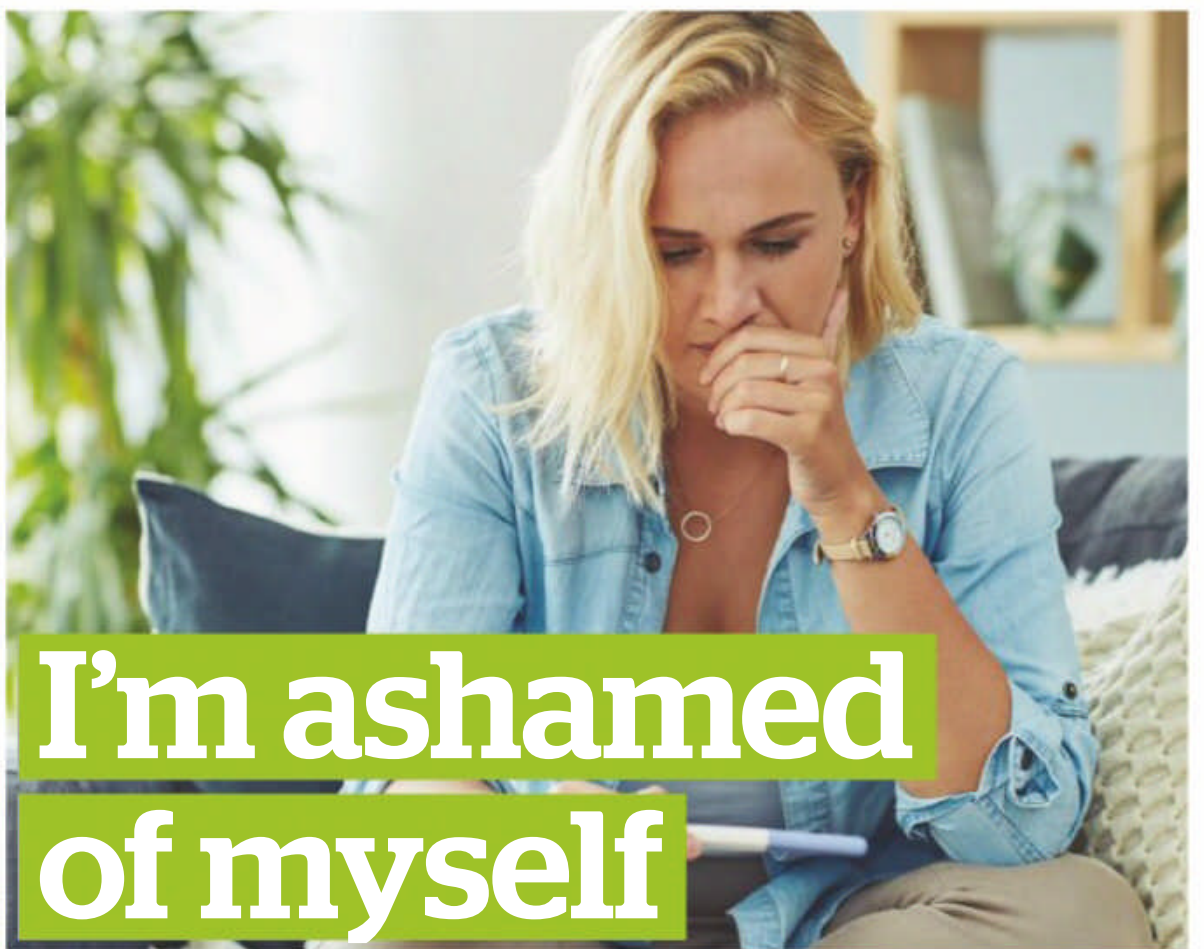


3 ways to... relax your mind

1 **DOWNLOAD THE ALOE BUD APP.** This all-in-one self-care app (free on iOS) helps you to develop self-care routines that work for you.

2 **DUMP THE TO-DO LIST.** You don't always have to be productive and tick off your chores. Let the laundry pile up for a few days and get someone else to cook dinner for a change. Have a night or day off – after all, you deserve it.

3 **UNPLUG.** Learn to switch off for an hour a day. It's simple but it will give you more time to relax. Endlessly scrolling on your phone keeps the mind active while unplugging allows your mind to settle and become less stressed.



I'm ashamed of myself

Q For the last two years, I've been having an affair with a man I met at work. I love my husband, but I believe that this man and I were meant to be together. But, out of the blue, he left me a blunt message saying he feels horrible about our affair and doesn't want to be with me any more. He said I should be ashamed of myself, and that I'm a terrible person for hurting so many people. I feel unable to respond, but I also think that much of what he's said about me is true.

Name and address withheld

A Guilt is an incredibly powerful emotion and it is often combined with feelings of shame and humiliation. If left unresolved, these emotions grow and I suspect this is why this man has lashed out at you so bluntly. What you need to do now is process what's happened and what you will do next. Internalising feelings of shame and remorse won't help you recover or feel better. Talk to a trained relationship counsellor, in a confidential and non-judgemental setting, to start unravelling your true feelings. Relate will be able to help (relate.org.uk).

We don't like his new girlfriend

Q My dad, 65, has a new girlfriend. The problem? She's 33 and is younger than me and my siblings. My parents have been divorced for years, and he's dated before, but I think this age gap is ridiculous. I feel embarrassed to have them over, and my teens think it's funny and make comments when they kiss. My mum thinks I should let him be, but I can't stand it.

Julie, 41, by email

A In many ways, your mum is right. This is your dad's life, and if he wants to

date someone 30 years his junior, then that's up to him. Let them get on with it. However, you can ask him to stop their public displays of affection, especially in front of your teens, which might lessen your embarrassment.

Contact Anita

Send your questions to askanita@futurenet.com, follow her on Twitter [@AnitaNaik](https://twitter.com/AnitaNaik), or go to anitanaik.com

GOOD FOR YOU!

Helping you make smart health choices

Have you heard about?

Tackling heart health

'Many early signs of heart disease can be easily written off,' says consultant cardiologist Dr Iqbal Malik from OneWelbeck. 'Look out for discomfort while climbing stairs, breathlessness and sudden palpitations that make you dizzy.'

Try using crystals

Lacking confidence? 'Wearing the gemstone labradorite is said to help banish fears and insecurities,' says expert Carrie Elizabeth (carrieelizabeth.co.uk). 'This is the perfect stone for anyone needing a confidence boost.'

Home improvements are good for health

Not only does DIY and gardening help burn 80,000 calories a year, but 47% of UK adults say it aids stress. 'Calories burnt during a typical year equates to 349 Mars bars,' says Kev Smith from Draper Tools, which ran the survey.



Gardening can be a stress-buster



Masks can cause glasses to fog up

How to...

stay fog-free

Do you wear glasses? Optician Andy Hepworth (essilor.co.uk) offers some suggestions of how to avoid fogging up when wearing a mask or face covering

1 Make sure the mask fits well

'A loose-fitting mask lets exhaled air head towards your glasses, whereas a snug-fitting one will allow air to flow out of the bottom or sides of the mask and away from the lens.'

2 Adjust the glasses

'If your glasses have nose pads, tweak them so the frames sit slightly lower down, which will allow hot air to escape. This will affect your vision if you are wearing progressive lenses, so make sure you readjust afterwards and before driving.'

3 Breathe downwards

'It might feel strange at first, but breathing downwards can be a temporary anti-fog fix as it sends the air away from your glasses. Hold your upper lip over your lower lip, then blow air downwards.'

68%* of Brits wear spectacles.

It worked for me



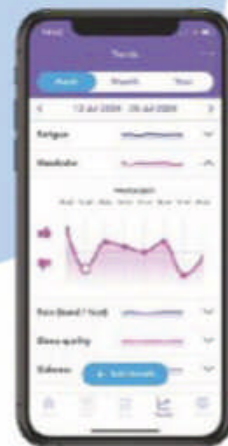
Nicola Saunders, 37, from West Sussex

'I'll typically get six bad cold-sore outbreaks a year. I've tried everything to help, but nothing has really worked. Then I read a review for **LipQ Liquorice Balm** (£8.50, lipq.co.uk). Normally, I'd have an open sore for about a week, but, after using this, it was gone in a few days. I couldn't believe how quickly the balm had worked. I haven't had a cold sore since starting it, and I've been recommending it to all my friends and family.'



App of the week

Are you a breast cancer patient or have a loved-one diagnosed? Accredited by NHS Digital, the new **OWise app** (free, Google Play and Apple App Store) can record audio notes from consultations, manage appointments and has a wealth of info on what to ask your doctor.



47%

of women in the UK say they weren't prepared for the menopause.**



Slim down with chocolate, wine & tacos

This exclusive WW diet will help you drop unwanted pounds while still enjoying the foods you thought were off-limits...

We don't know who started the rumour that weight loss means deprivation, but whoever they are, they're wrong! We've teamed up with WW, Weight Watchers reimagined, to offer you this exclusive diet plan which includes chocolate, wine, tacos and pasta. It's weight loss made easy!

How it works...

- Select the plan you think best suits you (see right), or find out what WW recommends via a self-assessment on the WW app. Here, you'll find breakfasts, lunches, and dinners from zero SmartPoints to 10, along with some desserts, snacks and drinks ideas. Don't worry if you don't use them all; weekly SmartPoints and roll-overs keep things flexible and liveable.
- Mix and match meals to create your own weekly meal plan based on the minimum daily budget for your chosen colour plan.
- There's a variety of fresh fruit and veg throughout the plan to help you get your five a day, but feel free to switch them up for seasonal favourites.
- Make sure you drink plenty throughout the day – between six and eight glasses, including coffee, tea, milk, no-added-sugar squash, diet drinks and water.

Introducing the new myWW 1 programme 3 ways to live it*

Building on the success of SmartPoints®** and ZeroPoint™ foods – the foods that form the basis of healthy eating habits – WW is introducing myWW, its most customised programme ever. Research shows everyone's weight-loss needs are different. With three ways to follow the programme based on preferences and lifestyle, myWW gives your body what it needs without you going hungry.

- **Green: 100+ ZeroPoint foods, with a minimum of 30 SmartPoints to spend on foods that you love. Ideal for those who love to eat out and grab 'n' go.**
- **Blue: 200+ ZeroPoint foods to build your meals around, with a minimum of 23 SmartPoints. (Current WW members will recognise this plan as WW Freestyle).**
- **Purple: 300+ ZeroPoint foods and a minimum of 16 SmartPoints. Great for carb lovers!**

The WW app



Simple ways to log food, water, sleep and activity, access to 2,000+ WW-approved recipes, equipment-free workouts and 24/7 live coaching. With the WW app, you get five apps in one!

Lose up to 2lb per week!

1

*NEW MEMBERS TAKE AN EVIDENCE-BASED SELF-ASSESSMENT THAT CONSIDERS FOOD PREFERENCES, ACTIVITY LEVELS, LIFESTYLE AND APPROACH TO WEIGHT LOSS, AND MATCHES THEM TO THE PLAN THAT WORKS BEST FOR THEM.

BREAKFASTS

1 French toast with strawberry sauce

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins |

Cook 10 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 8 6 6

Make a sauce by combining 300g hulled and chopped strawberries and 60ml water in a small saucepan set over a low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally for 2 mins, until the strawberries soften. Remove saucepan from heat and stir in 15g granulated sugar until dissolved. Set aside. To make the French toast, beat together 4 eggs, 80ml skimmed milk, 1tsp vanilla extract and ¼tsp ground cinnamon in a large shallow bowl. Dip 1 x 35g slice of brown bread into the egg mixture until well coated on both sides. Repeat with 7 more slices. Brush a frying pan with 2tsp vegetable oil and set over a medium heat. Cook the French toast, in batches, until deep golden for about 2 mins per side. To serve, place 2 pieces of French toast on each plate and spoon the sauce on top.

2 Egg in a courgetti nest

Serves 1 | Prep 15 mins |

Cook 10 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 5 3 3

Heat 1tsp olive oil in a medium non-stick frying pan and stir-fry 1 crushed garlic clove and a pinch of chilli flakes over a medium heat for 1-2 mins. Add 1 trimmed and spiralised courgette and 150g cherry tomatoes, then season and cook, stirring, for 2-3 mins. Make a well in the centre of the courgette mixture and crack 1 egg into it. Cook for 3-4 mins, until the egg white is



2

set and the yolk is soft. Carefully slide onto a plate, crumble over 20g light feta and serve topped with 2tbsp torn basil.

3 Granola & Greek yogurt pots with maple raspberries

Serves 6 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 20 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 6 6 3

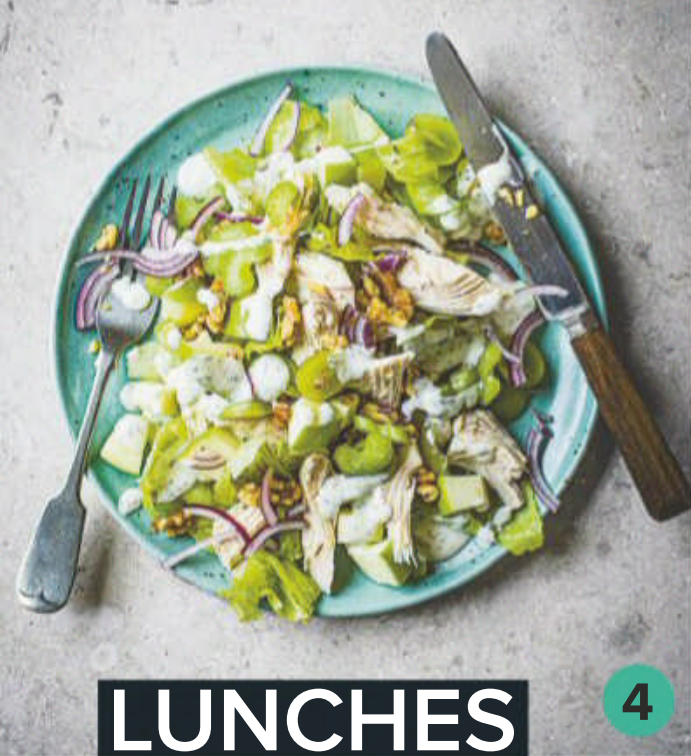
Preheat the oven to 150C/Fan 130C/Gas 2. Combine 1tbsp groundnut oil and 2tbsp maple syrup in a small pan and warm through. Mix together 150g porridge oats, 1tbsp desiccated coconut and the zest of an orange in a bowl and stir in the oil until well-coated. Scatter over a shallow baking tray and bake for 10-15 mins or until golden, occasionally shaking. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the tray until the granola is completely cold. Meanwhile, gently heat 300g raspberries with 1tbsp maple syrup in a small pan until they start to release the juice. Cool, then divide between 6 individual jars or bowls. Top each one with 1tbsp 0% fat natural Greek yogurt and 25g of the granola.

SmartPoints

****Every food and drink has a SmartPoints value: one simple number based on the calories, protein, saturated fat and sugar it contains. Protein drives the SmartPoints value down, while sugar and saturated fat drive it up. You have a personalised SmartPoints budget based on your age, weight, height and sex. As long as you don't overspend, you can expect to lose up to 2lb a week.**



3



LUNCHES

4 Roast chicken Waldorf salad

Serves 1 | Prep 10 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 8 5 5

In a medium bowl, toss together 120g shredded cooked skinless chicken breast, 1 small cored and diced apple, 1 thinly sliced celery stick, 8 halved white grapes, ¼ sliced small red onion and 20g roughly chopped walnuts. Season. Tear 3 cos lettuce leaves into bite-size pieces and arrange on a serving plate, then top with the chicken. In a bowl, whisk together 1tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise, 1tbsp 0% fat natural Greek yogurt, 1tbsp lemon juice, 1tsp white wine vinegar and ½tsp dried dill (or 1tsp chopped fresh dill), until combined, then drizzle over the salad and serve.

5 Tuscan-style bean pasta

Serves 2 | Prep 5 mins |

Cook 15 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 13 11 11

Bring a pan of water to boil, add 200g pappardelle and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving 125ml of the cooking water. Meanwhile, mist a large lidded frying pan with calorie-controlled cooking spray and set over a medium-low heat. Add 200g cherry tomatoes and 1 crushed garlic clove and cook, stirring, for 5 mins until softened. Add 150g spinach and 15ml lemon juice to



the pan, then cover and cook for 2 mins, until the spinach has just wilted. Remove from the heat and stir in 200g cannellini beans. Cover and set aside. While the pasta and veg are cooking, blitz a 25g slice white bread in a food processor (or grate using the coarse side of a grater) to a crumb. Mist a non-stick pan with cooking spray and toast the breadcrumbs for 1-2 mins over a medium heat, until crisp and golden. Season well, then stir through the zest of ½ a lemon. Toss the pasta with the vegetable and bean mixture, adding the reserved cooking water to loosen, if needed. Divide the pasta between bowls, then garnish with the breadcrumbs, 1tbsp chopped parsley and 1tsp chilli flakes.



6 Spinach & ricotta tortilla

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins |

Cook 20 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 5 4 2

Cook 300g sliced new potatoes in a pan of boiling water for 5 mins, or until just tender. Drain. Meanwhile, put 150g spinach in a microwave-safe bowl, cover and cook for 2 mins on high until wilted. Set aside until cool enough to handle, then squeeze out any excess liquid and roughly chop. Meanwhile, mist a large non-stick, oven-proof frying pan with calorie-controlled cooking spray and cook 1 thinly sliced onion over a medium heat for 5 mins, until starting to soften. Gently stir in the potato slices, then top with the spinach. Heat grill to high. In a bowl, combine 4 eggs, 100g ricotta and 50ml skimmed milk. Season, then pour over the vegetables, tilting the frying pan as you go so the vegetables are evenly covered by the egg mixture. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 5 mins, then transfer the pan to the grill and cook for 5 mins, until the tortilla is set and golden. While the tortilla is grilling, toss together 40g roasted red peppers, 160g salad leaves and 2tbsp fat-free salad dressing. Let the tortilla cool slightly, then cut into wedges and serve with salad leaves on the side.

7



DINNERS

7 Quick seafood stew

Serves 4 | Prep 5 mins |

Cook 15 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 7 5 5

Mist a deep non-stick frying pan with calorie-controlled cooking spray and put over a medium-high heat. Add 1 finely chopped onion, 2 deseeded and thinly sliced red peppers and 120g diced chorizo, stirring, for 2 mins or until the onion and peppers have softened. Add 2tsp paprika and ¼tsp chilli flakes, and stir for 1 min or until the paprika is fragrant. Add 400g tin chopped tomatoes, along with 125ml water, and bring to the boil. Add 600g mixed seafood and fish selection and simmer gently, stirring occasionally for 5 mins, or until the seafood and fish are cooked through. Scatter over 50g olives and 2tbsp chopped parsley and serve with rocket on the side.



8 Jackfruit tacos with sriracha mayonnaise

Serves 4 | Prep 20 mins |

Cook 35 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 11 9 9

Thinly slice 2 x 410g tins drained young jackfruit in water, then shred it using your fingers and set aside. Heat 2tsp vegetable oil in a large non-stick frying pan set over a medium heat. Add ½ finely diced onion and 2 finely chopped

garlic cloves and cook, stirring often, for 5 mins, until softened. Stir in 2tsp chilli powder, ½tsp dried oregano, ½tsp ground cumin and a pinch of salt, then cook for 1 min, until fragrant. Stir in the jackfruit, 1½ tbsp tomato purée and 125ml water. Bring the mixture to the boil, then reduce the heat and cook, covered, for 25 mins until the jackfruit is very tender, adding more water if the mixture starts to stick to the pan. Meanwhile, put 400g tin black beans and ½tsp chipotle paste in a small microwave-safe bowl along with 1tsp vegetable oil, ½tsp ground cumin and a pinch of salt. Cover with kitchen paper and microwave on high for 1-2 mins, stirring every 30 seconds, until very hot. Remove from the microwave and set aside to keep warm. To make the sriracha mayonnaise, combine 40g vegan mayonnaise, 2tsp lime juice and ¾tsp sriracha sauce in a small bowl. Thinly slice 1 avocado and prepare 80g shredded red cabbage. Warm 8 x 20g small white corn tortillas in the microwave for 10 seconds then fill with the jackfruit mixture, chipotle beans, avocado and cabbage. Drizzle over the sriracha mayo and serve two tacos per serving, garnished with fresh coriander.

9 Beef dhansak & fresh mango chutney

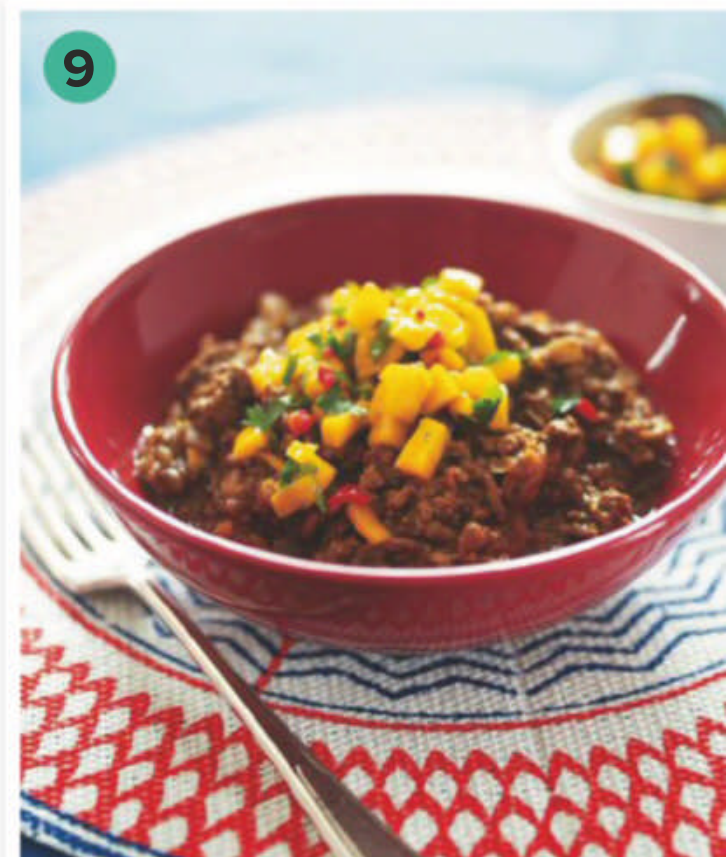
Serves 6 | Prep 20 mins |

Cook 40 mins

SMARTPOINTS: 4 2 2

Mist a large flame-proof lidded casserole dish with calorie-controlled cooking spray. Brown 500g extra-lean beef mince (5%) and 1 finely chopped onion together for 5 mins over a high heat, stirring frequently to break the mince up. Add 1tbsp medium curry powder and 2 crushed garlic cloves and cook for 2 mins. Mix in 400g tin chopped tomatoes, then rinse 100g dried red lentils in a sieve under cold running water and add them to the casserole, along with 400ml stock made with 1 beef stock cube. Bring

to the boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer for 25 mins or until the lentils are soft. Stir in 100g young leaf spinach, adjust the seasoning to taste and cook for a further 5 mins. While the curry is cooking, combine 1 finely chopped ripe mango, ½ finely chopped red chilli, the zest and juice of ½ lime and 3 tbsp chopped fresh coriander in a bowl and set aside for the flavours to infuse. Ladle the curry into warmed bowls and serve topped with the fresh mango chutney.



SNACKS

SMARTPOINTS

4 x Mikado Milk Chocolate sticks	2 2 2
Boiled egg with spinach	2 0 0
1tbsp reduced-fat houmous with crudités	2 2 2
15g peanut butter with chopped apple	3 3 3
125ml glass dry white wine	3 3 3

Get 15% off orders in the WW Shop!

To get your new healthy lifestyle off to a great start, use this exclusive *Woman's Own* reader offer to receive 15% off your orders in the WW Shop using code WOMANSOWN15.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Promotions apply from 22 September to 6 November 2020 or while stocks last. Get 15% off your orders in the WW Shop using code WOMANSOWN15. Shipping payable under £25. Free shipping over £25. Only one use of code per customer. Offers are non-transferable and no cash alternative or product alternatives will be offered. Offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers or vouchers. Offer valid whilst stocks last. Offer only valid in England, Scotland, Wales and Channel Islands only.



We're in this together

Steph Aburrow, 32, learnt that a little help from a friend can go a long way

Opening another bottle of wine and grabbing the box of chocolates from the fridge, I headed back to the living room. 'We really shouldn't have any more,' protested my best friend Debra, then 27, spying the treats in my hand. I rolled my eyes and tutted at her. 'Come on, we're celebrating! It's not every year you get married!' With that, we polished off the lot – but, as always, the guilt soon set in when talk turned to Debra's wedding in just seven months' time.

'I don't want to feel fat on my wedding day,' Debra sighed. I knew how she felt because I was dreading squeezing into my royal-blue maid-of-honour dress, too. But I'd tried to lose weight before and had failed miserably after I piled it all back on again shortly after. Willpower was not my strong point.

Growing up, I was always one of the bigger girls in my friendship circle. As a teenager, my friends were all size 8s and, next to them, I felt huge in my size 12-14 jeans. I always tried to eat healthily but I was never happy with my size. Then, shortly after turning 18, I fell pregnant with my daughter Lillie – and it was during one of my antenatal classes that I met Debra, then 17.

Like me, she didn't want to be seen as a stereotypical teenage mum – we both wanted to continue studying at university, get good jobs and give our children the best lives possible – and we soon became inseparable. We even gave birth just five days apart. But even with a great friend like her by my side, my confidence when it came to my body was low.

I signed up to WW and stuck to the diet plan for the best part of a year, and by the time Lillie turned one in September 2007 I'd hit my target weight of 8st 7lb. At 5ft 1in, I felt fantastic and had absolutely

no intention of ever putting weight back on, so I left the group thinking I was finally in control. But it's never that simple.

In the years that followed, my willpower and motivation wavered. 'I deserve a little treat,' I'd reason to myself, gorging a tub of Ben & Jerry's ice cream most nights after work as an account manager for a wine merchant.

Even though I never weighed myself, the signs were there – my jeans became tighter, so I swapped them for leggings. But I wasn't fazed and was so happy in all other aspects of my life that I didn't worry about it.

Wedding plans

Debra, in the meantime, had two more children and, in December 2013, announced that she and her partner Perran, 23, were engaged. 'I want you to be my maid of honour,' she said at the start of 2015 and I of course said yes. But as quickly as I'd agreed, feelings of dread soon set in. The last thing I wanted was to be the big bridesmaid among the three of us. 'I think I'm going to go back to WW,' I blurted and Debra nodded with me.

'I wouldn't mind losing a couple of stone before the big day, too,' she shrugged. 'Just to make sure the dress fits comfortably.'

We searched online and found a local group, both agreeing to attend the next meeting. Whereas I knew what to expect, the whole thing was completely new to Debra, and I could tell she was nervous. 'We can do this,' I said, giving her a squeeze at our first meeting – and,



STEPH
Before
13st 3lb
After
9st 3lb

truthfully, it felt nice knowing I'd have her by my side this time around. 'We can help each other out,' she agreed.

It was tough to begin with, especially as we had Debra's hen night and many evenings spent doing wedding planning where a bottle of wine and crisps would have gone down a treat. Every morning she'd send me a motivational quote and I'd send her pictures of my meals, things like jacket potato with shredded chicken, to give her inspiration.

By July 2015, Debra had managed to shift a stone, and I'd lost just shy of a stone, too. She looked stunning in her bridal gown as she walked down the aisle, and though I'd still had to have my dress altered, I felt proud of what I'd achieved.

Unfortunately, though, after the wedding, with no goal to aim for any more, we both fell off plan completely. Life got busy



Real Life Behind the photos

DEBRA
Before
13st 13lb
After
10st 6lb



been trying to get to this point, where I not only looked good, but felt it too. Now all I wanted was for Debra to feel this way, too.

It took her a little while but I think seeing me reach my goal gave her the push she needed. And it was actually lockdown that really helped her. We attended virtual meetings with our amazing coach and she bought a Fitbit so we could do step challenges together. And when she reached her goal

weight of 10st 10lb in July, I was thrilled for her. 'I knew you could do it!' I told her and she thanked me for all the support, but honestly I think we both needed each other. There's no way I'd be where I am today without her.

Now we've dropped a couple more pounds each and are maintaining our weight loss comfortably. We still go to WW and we won't be giving up at all this time, and I can't stress enough how having my best friend at my side makes it all easier. We've been there through the highs and the lows, and now it feels like, together, we can achieve anything.

● Follow Steph and Debra's journey on Instagram @dochertys_WW_divas

'IF SHE COULD DO IT, THEN SO COULD I'

Debra Maddern, 31, lives in Chichester with her husband, Perran, 29, and their three children, Casey, 14, Maddison, nine, and Bella, seven.

After having kids, I stopped looking after myself, the weight piled on and I thought I'd never get it off again. But seeing Steph reach her target in 2019 gave me the confidence to finally commit to my own weight loss. If she

could do it, then so could I.

With her help and support, I made healthier choices, even during lockdown, and now, with things slowly getting back to normal, Steph and I are still working hard to maintain our weight loss. Not only have we made our own lives better but both our families get to reap the benefits, too.

again with work and the kids, and losing weight just got buried down our list of priorities. If one of us suggested going to the gym, we could easily be talked out of it by the other – opting for a sofa-and-wine night instead. 'You're a bad influence,' we'd tease each other and I wondered if we'd ever get our motivation back.

New beginning

Then, at the start of 2018, the topic of losing weight once again came up. We were both about to turn 30 and I wanted this to be a new start for us. 'This is the year of being 30 and thin,' I laughed and we soon adopted it as our mantra. We went back to WW and began encouraging each other to stick to the plan.

If I ever wavered, Debra was right there to say, 'Come on, you can do this!' and we

would support each other and drag the other kicking and screaming if we had to.

The same year, my relationship broke down and, as devastated as I was, it just pushed me to focus on my weight loss even more. Each week, I lost around 2lb and I enjoyed discussing my food plans for the week ahead. I was feeling better than ever, but I could see Debra

was struggling to stay motivated. I carried on encouraging her, though. 'I know you can do it, we've just got to believe in ourselves,' I'd text her.

Finally, in April 2019, I hit my target of 9st 7lb. 'I'm so proud of you!' Debra beamed and I was so happy I could have cried. For years, I'd



Steph and Debra after a workout



The Duchess of Sussex's mascara

Actor, philanthropist and now Meghan can add make-up maestro to her list of credentials. It was actually the duchess herself who recommended **Maybelline Lash Sensational Mascara**, £8.99, to her long-time make-up artist, Lydia Sellers. 'I keep it stocked in my kit now at all times thanks to her,' says Lydia. 'It helps to amplify your lashes and polish off the entire look.'



Rihanna's hair hero

From modelling to music videos, wigs to sleek blow-dries, Rihanna's hair goes through the mill. During her hairdo downtime, Rihanna's hairstylist, Yusef Williams, uses **ORS Olive Oil Lotion**, £3.74, boots.com, on her natural locks. It's a great product for frazzled, heat-damaged hair, boosting elasticity, replenishing moisture and enhancing shine.



Celebrity beauty

Want to know how Gwyneth, Kate and Meghan look so good? We reveal their secret beauty buys

Gwyneth Paltrow's cult cleanser

With a successful wellness website, when Gwynnie says something is worth a punt, we'll take her word for it. Gwyneth hails **Bioderma Sensibio H2O Micellar Water**, £10.80, 'the best make-up remover,' on goop.com. Pour a splash or two on a cotton pad and sweep across the face to remove make-up (even stubborn mascara).



The Duchess of Cambridge's wrinkle smoother

Did you notice how amazing Kate looked on those Zoom calls during lockdown? Her skincare secret is an organic 'Botox' gel, called **Biotulin Supreme Skin Gel**, £44.98, biotulin.com, which helps to smooth lines without numbing your face or restricting movement. Rumour has it that she even recommended the product to Michelle Obama!



Get an A-list complexion

Best primer

NYX Professional Makeup With Me Primer, £13, is infused with skin-soothing oil to provide a silky canvas ready for foundation. The universal tone blurs out imperfections, like your favourite Instagram filter.



Best base

Thirsty skin looks dull and crêpey under make-up, but **L'Oréal Paris Skin Paradise Tinted Water-Cream**, £10.99, drenches skin with 24 hours' worth of hydration in one hit for a Hollywood glow.



Best finisher

Lock down your look with **Flower Beauty Seal the Deal Long-Lasting Setting Spray**, £7.99, superdrug.com. Drew Barrymore's the creator, so you know it'll have star-approved staying power.



Best blush

Charlotte Tilbury is the A-list's go-to make-up artist, so expect her new **Pillow Talk Lip & Cheek Glow in Colour of Dreams**, £30, charlottetilbury.com, to give a scene-stealing glow.



Best glow-getter

Blend Natural Collection Highlighter Stick, £2.49, boots.com, across the tops of your cheek and brow bones to enhance your facial structure. A touch above the Cupid's bow creates the illusion of plumper lips, too.



Holly Willoughby's lush lippy

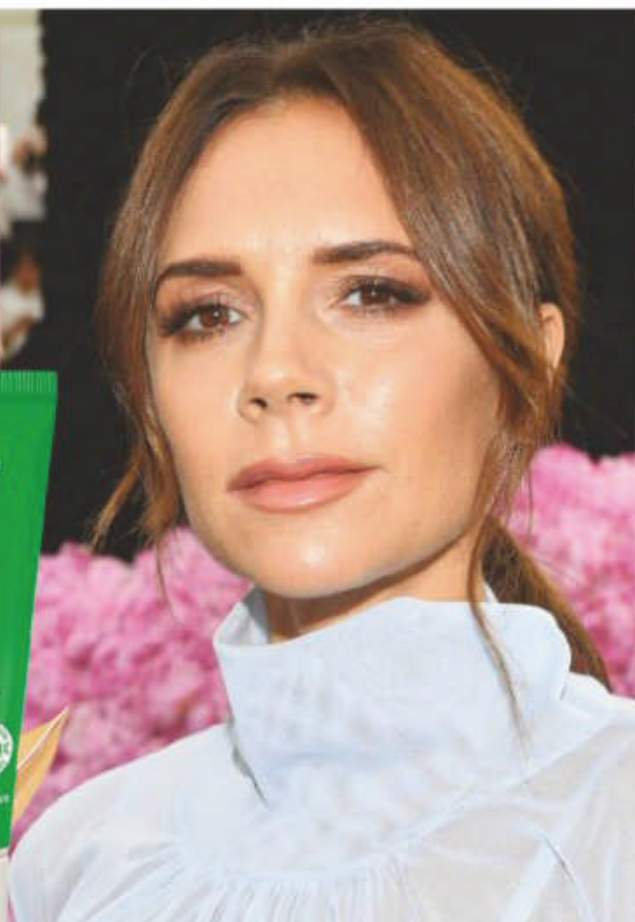
Flawless skin, curled lashes and a pop of bright lipstick – that's Holly's signature look. Her latest lippy must-have is **Lavera Beautiful Lips Colour Intense in Pink Orchid**, £12.90, laverauk.co.uk, which she recently shared with her Instagram followers. It's packed with organic oils to keep lips soft and supple.



secrets

Victoria Beckham's tanning secret

Posh would never be papped without a sun-kissed, 'just got back from my yacht in St Tropez' glow. And when she's not jet-setting and wants to prolong the life of her tan she slathers on **Weleda Skin Food**, £7.95, weleda.co.uk. It's cramp-packed with lovely oils and plant-based goodness, which load the skin with moisture so you get more mileage out of your summer tan.



Shop Watch

From
£1.75

Give your home a makeover with these stylish and chic buys from your favourite stores

Dunelm



Wall clock,
£30

Bowl, £1.75

Oak stool,
£49



Retro vase, £8

Framed canvas, £15,
string pendants, £25 each,
dining table, £399,
dining bench, £169,
acacia platter, £22,
mug, £5, ceramic vases,
from £8 each, all Dunelm



Set of four
mugs, £5



Teapot,
£27.50

Matalan



Set of four
coasters, £4



Velour
cushion, £6

Next

Table lamp, £28



Elephant cushion, £16



Knitted pouffe, £70



Elephant sculpture, £14



Set of two baskets, £14



Artificial aloe in pot, £25



Ochre throw, £20



Drawers, £16



Dog duvet set, £15



Tealight holder, £8, elephant framed print, £22, cutwork lantern, £80, mercury vase, £24, all Next



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We make

Celebrating the women whose job it is to bring entertainment as well as a bit of education

'There's something majestic about watching a bird soar'

Tori Goodall, 39, lives in Hummerbeck, County Durham, with her husband, David, 48. She is Head Falconer at Walworth Birds of Prey. Asking a group of children to close their eyes, I instructed our beautiful owl, Ted, to fly over them. When the children opened their eyes, they couldn't believe Ted was now perched at the other end of the arena. With a 2m wingspan, she flies silently. The look of wonder on their faces is exactly how I feel about Ted, and all our birds, while watching them soar.

Before I met David, I'd have run away from a pigeon. He bred goshawks, and when he invited me to witness his goshawk hunt, I fell in love with both the goshawk and David.

As our interest in birds of prey grew, we were asked to put on displays at shows. Four years later, Walworth Castle, just outside Darlington, offered us a permanent location to build a visitor attraction, although our hawks, falcons, buzzards, eagles and owls also attend weddings, fetes and country shows.

We stick to our founding principles. Our birds get lots of exercise and lead happy lives. We catch all our own food for the birds, with the birds. They live in spacious aviaries and have lots of time out.

Frankie, a South American Harris's hawk, is my favourite. She's never let me down, unlike her sister, Connie, who once stole and shredded a child's teddy bear! Each bird has their own unique personality.

Our displays are fun and informative, educating people on the importance of conservation. We

include native birds so I can teach people about an owl or a kestrel, then explain where we might see them in the wild.

I receive lovely reviews and was nominated for a VisitEngland Tourism Superstar award earlier this year, but I just feel lucky that I get to share my love of birds with other people. I can see the impact our birds have on our audience, but they've had just as big an impact on me.

● walworthbirdsofprey.com

The falconer

Birds of prey have changed Tori's life

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work fun

'We sprinkle magic on England's history'

Anna Warnecke, 40, lives in Hunwick, near Bishop Auckland, with her husband, Graham, and their children, Lucy, seven, and Lukas, three. She plays Boudicca in Kynren's live-action show, depicting the history of England through the centuries.

As fireworks light up the sky and music fills the arena, our epic tale culminates with every horse and member of our team arriving on stage. The crowd cheers as my heart swells with a mix of adrenaline and pride. There's such a buzz on stage and the show is spectacular to behold.

My husband Graham's parents run Seagold Centurion Equestrian Centre, a riding school near Bishop Auckland. I was a professional three-day eventer and kept my horses at the riding school.

Kynren is set in the neighbouring fields and when it was announced, we wanted to be involved. The charity behind the production, Eleven Arches, invited us to train the horses and riders, and I became Director of Equine and

The historical horse-woman

Animal Training. I've trained my horse, Gadelha, to rear, which he loves.

The story is told through the eyes of Arthur, a 10-year-old boy who travels through time. We take the most interesting moments from 2,000 years of English history, throw in some myth and legend, and add a sprinkling of magic. The show involves a cast and crew of 1,000 people and 150 horses, sheep, goats, donkeys, cows, geese and ducks.

The show opened in 2016 and has grown every year. I took on the role of Boudicca last year. I wear a stunning costume, a feather headdress and a cloak that flows over the horse.



Anna helps bring the past to life

Throughout the year, we teach the volunteers to ride horses in costume, while wielding weapons. It's hard work but the pay-off is a part in a world-class show.

During summer, every week is geared towards Saturday night's show. There are milkmaids, blacksmiths, stonemasons, villagers and children. It's a beautiful atmosphere – no one wants to go home!

I feel like the luckiest person in the world because I get to spend all day with the horses while inspiring people to marvel at England's history. I'm so proud when it all comes together for a night that brings happiness into people's lives.

● To find out more, visit kynren.com

'We're happy to make huge fools of ourselves'

Marianne Grove, 56, lives in Kent with her children, Olive, 19, and Clay, 12. She and Winnie Elliott, 52, run Circo Rum Ba Ba, an all-female circus troupe.

The circus performer

Peeking out at the audience before our

show in Bradford, I could see a diverse group had gathered. It was August 2018 and, as the show started, Winnie was on stage while Jen – one of our performers – and I waited behind the set.

The audience were laughing, and I beamed with pride. Our antics were uniting people of different cultures in the collective enjoyment of spectacle.

I've been a circus performer all my life, but for years was often the only woman performer. So, 22 years ago, I set up Circo Rum Ba Ba. While I was in the early stages, I went on tour as a clown, and the other person in the act was Winnie. She had extraordinary slapstick skills, and I knew she'd be an asset.

Winnie took charge of admin, while I wrote the shows – and to

this day, we perform everything together. We've performed at events for the Queen, pop stars and footballers, but the majority of our work is free to the public, paid for by councils and festival organisers.

Every year, we add a new show to our repertoire, rehearsing in my local village hall and trying it out on the locals. It's all very slapstick, with acrobatics, aerial silks, hat juggling, musical saw and harp playing, and loving nods to the silent-movie era. We have to be fit to keep the pace and I'm still doing acrobatics, stilt walking and physical slapstick. We are a troupe of skilled, strong, funny women prepared to make fools of ourselves. We want our audience to be entertained by an amazing show performed by women who take risks while being kind to each other, so they, too, can be sure of their own potential.

● circorumbaba.com



Marianne (left) and Winnie enjoy uniting the crowd

Easy-to-share traybakes

Pop the kettle on, cut into portions and satisfy your sweet tooth with these Test Kitchen traybakes

TEST
KITCHEN
UK

Rhubarb crumble cake

Serves 12

We've turned the classic pudding into a cake – it's sure to impress!

You will need

For the crumble

- * 100g cold butter, cubed
- * 100g plain flour
- * 100g demerara sugar
- * 100g skin-on almonds, chopped
- * 400g pink rhubarb, chopped into 5cm pieces
- * 30g caster sugar
- * Zest of 1 orange

For the cake

- * 175g soft butter, plus extra for greasing
- * 200g caster sugar
- * 1tsp vanilla paste
- * Zest of 1 orange
- * 4 large eggs
- * 175g plain flour
- * 1tsp baking powder
- * 100g ground almonds
- * 100g skin-on almonds, chopped
- * 1x 23cm round pie tray, greased

How to do it

1 To make the crumble, rub the butter, flour and demerara sugar together until the mix resembles large breadcrumbs, add

in the chopped nuts and set aside.

2 Preheat oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Toss the rhubarb in the sugar and orange zest and bake in the oven for 10-15 mins until just tender. Remove and leave to cool.

3 Meanwhile, make the cake by creaming the butter, sugar, vanilla paste and orange zest together until light, add in the eggs gradually and mix until fully incorporated. Sift the flour, baking powder and ground almonds, and fold this through the mixture, followed by the chopped nuts.

4 Pour the batter into a greased baking tray and spread evenly. Top with the rhubarb and crumble and bake in the oven for 40-45 mins until golden. Leave to cool completely before serving.

PREP TIME: 20 MINS, PLUS COOLING

COOK TIME: 1 HR

SKILL LEVEL: EASY

CALS: 588

FAT: 35G SAT FAT: 14G

CARBS: 47G

TIP

Adapt the recipe so you can use it all-year-round with seasonal fruits.

Lemon-thyme squares

Makes 15

Try our herbaceous twist on a lemony classic

You will need

For the lemon-thyme shortbread

- * 250g butter, softened
- * 120g caster sugar
- * 2tsp vanilla paste
- * 2tbsp fresh lemon thyme
- * 250g plain flour
- * 2tbsp cornflour
- * ¼tsp salt

For the lemon filling

- * 6 large eggs
- * 400g caster sugar
- * 4 lemons, zested
- * 240ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
- * 150g plain flour
- * Icing sugar, for dusting
- * 1x 23x33cm baking tin, lined with parchment

How to do it

1 Cream the butter until pale, add in the sugar, vanilla paste and lemon thyme, and mix to combine. Sift the plain

flour, cornflour and salt together, and mix this into the butter until just combined. Turn out the dough, shape into a ball and then press flat into the baking tin. Chill for 20 mins.

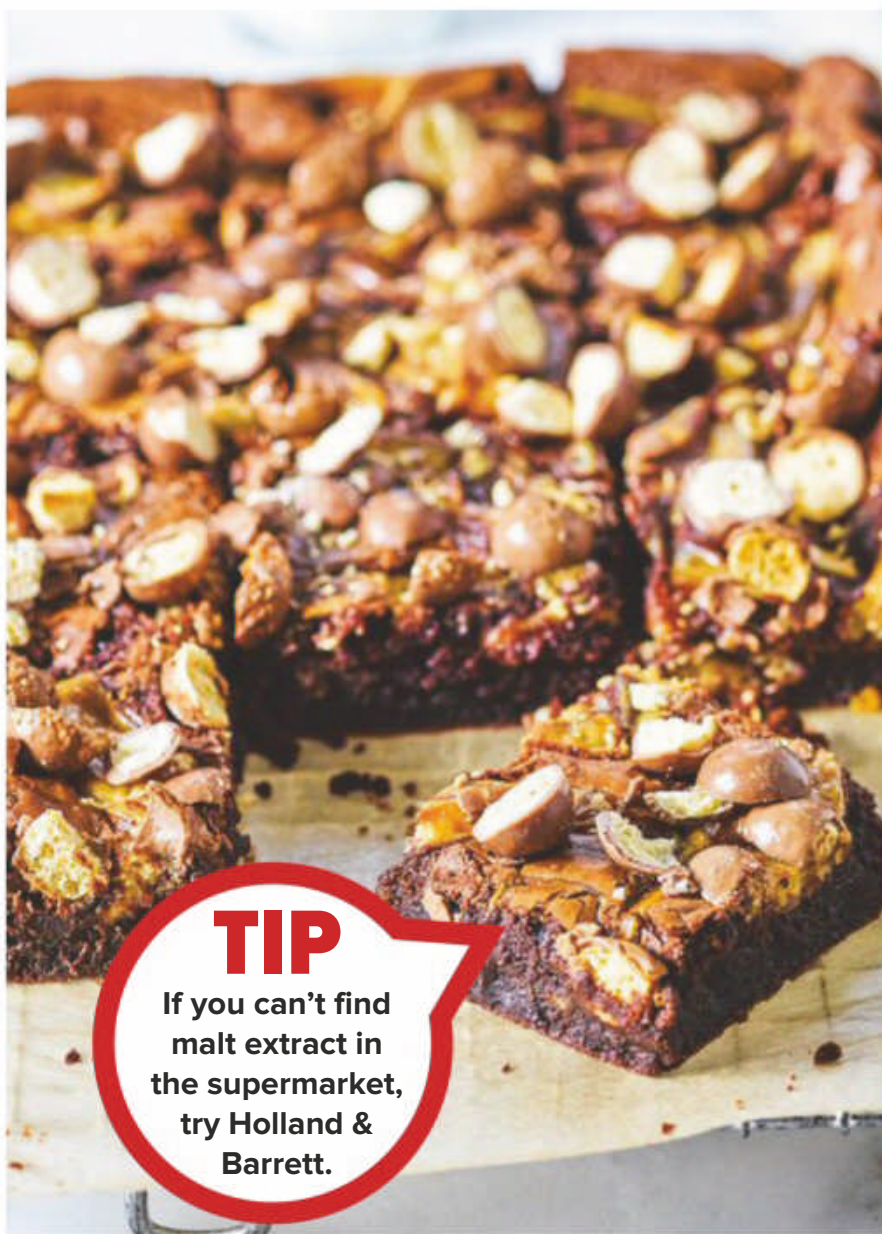
2 Preheat oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Bake the shortbread for 15 mins before removing and leaving to cool.

3 To make the filling, whisk the eggs and sugar together until smooth, add the lemon zest and juice and stir. Sift the flour and add this to the combined mixture. Pour the filling over the shortbread, place back into the oven and bake for a further 30 mins, or until just set. Leave to cool completely before dusting with icing sugar and slicing.

PREP TIME: 20 MINS
COOK TIME: 45 MINS
SKILL LEVEL: EASY
CALS: 406 FAT: 17G
SAT FAT: 10G CARBS: 57G

TIP

The first slice is always the hardest to remove, so cut a square in the corner first and the rest will be a breeze.



TIP

If you can't find malt extract in the supermarket, try Holland & Barrett.

Malteser brownies

Makes 15

The much-loved chocolates make these brownies even better and tastier

You will need

For the malt cheesecake swirl

- * 340g tub cream cheese
- * 90g malt extract

For the brownies

- * 225g butter
- * 300g dark chocolate
- * 3 large eggs
- * 270g light brown sugar
- * 90g plain flour
- * 90g bag maltesers, chopped, to decorate
- * 1x 23x33cm brownie tin, lined with parchment

How to do it

1 Preheat oven to 170C/ Gas 3. To make the malt cheesecake swirl, whisk together the cream cheese and malt extract and set aside.

2 To make the brownie, melt the butter and the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Once fully melted, take off the heat to cool slightly.

3 Whisk the eggs and sugar together until light and fluffy, then fold this into the chocolate mix, and then sift over the flour, folding gently.

4 Pour the brownie mix into the prepared tin. Add dollops of the malted cream cheese on top, and swirl through the batter with a skewer or knife.

5 Bake for around 35-40 mins. Remove from the oven and cool for 2-3 hours before cutting into squares.

PREP TIME: 10 MINS, PLUS COOLING
COOK TIME: 35-40 MINS
SKILL LEVEL: EASY
CALS: 427 FAT: 26G SAT FAT: 16G CARBS: 43G

Carrot, apricot and raisin cake

Serves 12

Just like the classic, but with even more fruit for added moisture and flavour!

You will need

- * 50g raisins
- * 50g ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
- * Grated rind and juice of 1 orange
- * 225g plain wholewheat flour
- * 1½tsp baking powder
- * 1tsp mixed spice
- * ½tsp cinnamon
- * 125g golden caster sugar
- * 125g coarsely grated carrots
- * 75ml sunflower oil
- * 2 large free-range eggs

For the icing

- * 150g dairy-free margarine
- * 300g icing sugar
- * Pinch of cinnamon
- * 20cm square cake tin, greased and lined

How to do it

1 Soak the raisins and apricots in the orange juice and zest while weighing out all the other

ingredients. Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. Place the flour, baking powder, spice and sugar in a large mixing bowl. Add the carrots.

2 Beat together the oil and eggs and add to the flour mixture with the soaked fruits. Stir well and pour into the cake tin. Bake for 20-30 mins until golden and just firm to the touch. Allow to cool.

3 To make the icing, beat the margarine, icing sugar and cinnamon together and spread over the cake. Serve cut into squares.

TIP

Try adding some chopped, toasted walnuts to the cake batter or sprinkle them on top of the icing for added texture.

PREP TIME: 10 MINS

COOK TIME: 30 MINS

SKILL LEVEL: EASY

CALS: 378 FAT: 17 G SAT FAT: 3G CARBS: 52G



TIP

For added indulgence, try drizzling melted milk and white chocolate over the top.

Fruity peanut flapjacks

Makes 12

Peanut butter is our secret ingredient – it helps bind all the ingredients together and tastes amazing too

You will need

- * 300g jumbo oats
- * 60g pumpkin seeds
- * 60g sunflower seeds
- * 30g desiccated coconut
- * 60g plain flour
- * 90g soft dried apricots, chopped
- * 90g dried cranberries
- * 200g butter
- * 200g golden syrup
- * 150g light muscovado sugar
- * 125g crunchy peanut butter
- * 20 x 30cm tin, greased and lined with baking parchment

How to do it

1 Heat the oven to 170C/Gas 3. Combine the oats, pumpkin and sunflower

seeds, desiccated coconut, flour, dried apricots and dried cranberries in a large bowl and mix them together thoroughly.

2 Gently melt the butter with the golden syrup in a pan, then add the sugar and peanut butter. Stir until the mixture has melted and the sugar has completely dissolved. Pour into the dry ingredients and mix until well combined.

3 Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 20-25 mins or until golden and just firm. Cool in the tin, then cut into 12 bars to serve.

PREP TIME: 5 MINS

COOK TIME: 25 MINS

SKILL LEVEL: EASY

CALS: 514

FAT: 28G SAT FAT: 12G

CARBS: 54G

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Tarantella Organic Passata 690g (Asda)

SLIMMER'S EXPRESS PIZZA

Serves 4

You will need

- * 200g passata
- * ½tsp sugar
- * juice of ½ lemon
- * 1tsp dried oregano
- * 400g baby spinach
- * 4 flatbreads or flour tortillas
- * 2tbsp sliced black olives
- * 120g reduced-fat mature Cheddar, grated
- * 4 medium eggs

How to do it

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Heat the passata in a pan with the sugar, lemon juice and oregano, simmer for 5 mins.

2 Put the spinach in a bowl, cover with boiling water and leave for 1 min. Drain, squeeze out the excess water and chop.



WAS £1.58
NOW £1



3 Put the flatbreads or tortillas on baking trays lined with baking paper. Spread each one with passata. Leaving a gap in the centre for the egg, scatter over the spinach, olives and cheese. Crack an egg into the centre of each pizza and bake for 10 mins until the egg white is set but the yolk is runny.



WAS £1.50
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Made with half white and half wholemeal flour, this is a great way to get more fibre into your diet without even noticing. It's also enriched with vitamin D and calcium for strong bones and teeth. Sandwiches have never tasted so good!

Bargain BOOZE

Yali Wild Swan Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot 75cl (Co-op)

Whether you prefer red or white, you're covered with this offer. These wines from Central Chile are great for drinking with or without food. The Sauvignon Blanc has tropical and citrus flavours while the Merlot tastes of cherries and plums.



Was £7.50
Now £5.50

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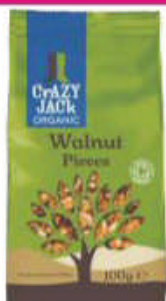
Start the day the healthy way with a warming bowl of instant porridge.

Quick and easy, it comes in five fab flavours, Blueberry & Banana, Red Berry & Pumpkin Seed, Strawberry & Peanut Butter, Caffè Latte and Classic Chocolate.



WAS £3.99
NOW £2.99

3 of the best... basket buys



WAS £2
NOW £1.50

CRUNCH TIME

Crazy Jack Organic Walnut Pieces 100g (Asda)



WAS £2.25
NOW £1.75

FEELING FRUITY

Fruit Bowl Peeler (Tesco)



WAS £1.10
NOW 90p

CIRCLE OF LIFE

Oreo Doughnut (Sainsbury's)

NICE AS PIE PORK FARMS MINI PORK AND BRANSTON TOPPED PIES 4-PACK (ASDA)

Small but perfectly formed, these mini pork pies made with 100% British pork and topped with Branston pickle are a winning combination.



WAS £1.55
NOW £1

Are we headed cashless soc

The digital revolution is moving at an alarming speed, and we are leaving some of our most vulnerable members of society behind

Cash hasn't been king for a long time. Since the rise of contactless cards, online shopping and digital payments, we've been hurtling towards a world where spare change doesn't exist.

In the past decade, cash transactions have dropped from 63% of all payments to 34%. If this decline continued on its current projection, it would mean Britain becomes cashless by 2026.* And the coronavirus pandemic has only speeded up this move, with people shunning coins and notes to both avoid spreading the virus and abide by social-distancing rules.

Cash and ATM use in the UK has almost halved since the beginning of the pandemic,** with free ATMs disappearing from our high streets at an alarming rate.

There is no question that contactless, card and online payments have their benefits – you can even pay using your phone these days. But is society leaving some people behind? The elderly, for whom cash has always been a way of life, the millions without a bank account, children saving their pocket money, or domestic-violence victims trying to save themselves? *Woman's Own* investigates.

Hidden costs of living
in a cash-free society

AS OUR HIGH STREETS GO CASHLESS

Extinction
in billions

Poorer areas losing
free cash machines

***Savings were key
to my freedom***

Sam lives with her two children.*

It's easy to say when you're on the outside looking in at an abusive relationship, 'Why doesn't she just leave him?' But I know why victims don't. Or rather, can't. They have no money, no one to turn to and nowhere to go. It took me 10 years to escape my abusive partner. I was

14 when one of the

dads of the kids I babysat for began to make clear that he had feelings for me. I was flattered, and by the time I was 16, we'd started a relationship and he'd left his wife and children.

**According
to UK Finance,
2.2 million people
still exclusively
use cash, of
which 1.3 million
have no bank
account.**

***'If I wanted
money for
food I had
to ask him'***

'I gave up my family for you,' he'd say, making me feel like the most important person in the world. But that's what they do – groomers, abusers.

I was infatuated, and no matter what anyone said, I couldn't see why the 20-odd year age gap was a problem.

We got our own house and I got a job, but nothing I did was good enough. By my mid-20s, we had two kids, and every penny I earned went on bills. He didn't give me access to bank accounts, so if I wanted money for food, or clothes

for the kids, I had to ask. He also took out loans and maxed-out credit cards that I had to pay off. I was his emotional and financial prisoner.

Then one day, I saw a video of myself at 14 and realised how young, innocent and vulnerable I'd been. Still, it wasn't

to a anxiety?



The Bank of England and WHO have stressed that cash doesn't pose any greater risk of carrying coronavirus than any other items.

until he raped me in front of our child that I knew I had to escape.

So I secretly saved spare change from the money he gave me for groceries and other essentials. Over six months, I managed to give £20 here and £10 there to a trusted friend to hide for me. Eventually, I had enough for a deposit on a rented house and a few months' rent.

While he was at work one day, I took the kids and moved out. For a while, I let him see the kids as I didn't want them to be without a dad, but when he started trying to control me again, I packed up and moved. I felt lost and alone and, at times, was close to going back to my ex, craving some sort of stability. But, instead, I sought advice from Women's Aid, who found me a counsellor – they made me realise I wasn't crazy or alone.

I completed the Freedom Programme, a course about domestic violence, which taught me so much. And I am testament

to the fact that it does get easier over time.

Abusers are clever at disguising their method of control – be it financial, emotional or physical – until it's too late. And to get out, you need to plan and save – which is why cash is so important for women in my position. Even a small amount of money, and help from trusted people, can give you the keys to freedom.

JOIN THE FIGHT

Cash is a necessity for millions, and a backup when online systems fail. With banks and ATMs disappearing, consumer group Which? is concerned that some may be left behind. Help protect cash as a payment option by signing the petition at campaigns.which.co.uk/freedom-to-pay

Millions will be abandoned



Gareth Shaw, Head of Money at Which?, says: Our research has shown that cash remained very important to many consumers

during the coronavirus outbreak, particularly for vulnerable people who relied on it to pay for essential supplies. But the impact of the pandemic resulted in access to cash shrinking rapidly, as some bank branches reduced their hours or shut their doors completely, while thousands of cash machines were also taken out of service – with no guarantee that they will all return.

It also led to some businesses starting to discourage cash payments, meaning some people even struggled to spend the money that was already in their pocket.

While more people are changing the way they bank by moving online, it's vital that those who still depend on cash are not forgotten.

Access to cash needs to be protected by the government for as long as people need it, and that must happen urgently. If it doesn't, it'll become harder to find and pay with cash, which will leave millions of people abandoned.

What a cashless society will look like...

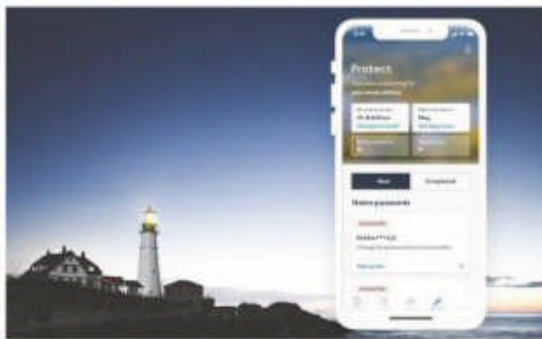
- ✗ No more squirrelled cash for those preparing to escape domestic violence.
- ✗ No more garage, car-boot or jumble sales.
- ✗ No more cash donations to the homeless and vulnerable.
- ✗ No more pocket money, or pennies slipped to grandchildren from grandparents.
- ✗ No more money popped into birthday cards.
- ✗ No more kids' piggy banks or visits from the tooth fairy.
- ✗ No more selling unwanted items locally via online markets – unless you want to risk bank-transfer fraud.

MONEY MATTERS

Our expert Rebecca Gamble helps make your cash go further

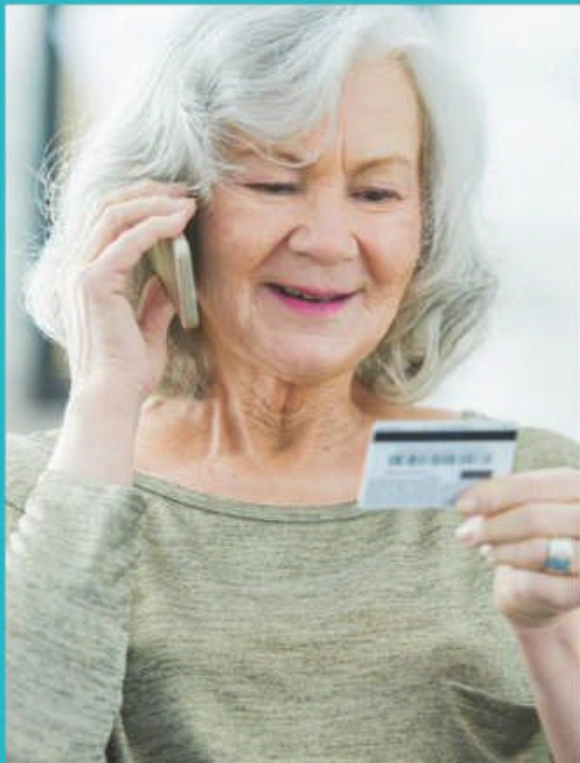
HAVE YOU HEARD?

Credit management app ClearScore has launched a free dark web monitoring service that checks if passwords to your online accounts have been stolen by criminals. The ClearScore Protect tool alerts users to any potential breaches every three months. You'll also get personalised security tips to protect your identity. Visit clearscore.com for info.



IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS WEEK... BE SCAM SAVVY

Almost half of Brits would willingly move their money to another bank account if asked to do so over the phone by someone claiming to be a police officer or bank worker, Santander's research into 'safe account scams' revealed. For more information, visit santander.co.uk.



3

mortgage application mistakes to avoid

If you want your mortgage application to stand the best chance of being accepted, here's what to watch out for, says John Ellmore, director of comparison site knowyourmoney.co.uk.

1 Getting the basics wrong

'A common mistake people make is being confused by a Mortgage in Principle (also known as Agreement in Principle or Decision in Principle),' says John. 'It's a statement by a lender on how much they would loan you based on your income, savings and deposit amount but it's not a formal offer; you'll still need to pass the full application,' he adds. 'Also if you've changed jobs

recently, lenders might reject your mortgage application as you must be able to prove you've had a reliable income stream for up to six months, although the time period varies by lender.'

2 Lack of preparation

'It's vital to sort out your finances before applying. Lenders want to see you can comfortably afford your mortgage repayments; they'll analyse your spending habits to ensure holding a mortgage doesn't put you under financial strain,' says John. 'It's important to be mindful of this in the months before you apply. Ensure you have all necessary documentation to hand,' he adds. 'Employed people will need to provide payslips, their P60, and bank statements.'

How to... successfully change your career

Navigating a career change can take some careful planning. Here's what you need to know, from Shelley Preston, head of recruitment consultants Adecco (adecco.co.uk).

1 Find your calling

'If you have a clear idea of what career path you want to move to then that's a great starting point, but if you want a change and you're not sure what you want to do, take your time. Think about your interests and research the types of careers that are best suited to you,' says Shelley. 'Also consider the skills you already have and have a think about what careers you could transfer those to.'

'Ensure you're signed up to LinkedIn, the social networking site that focuses on professional networking and career development. Use it to make connections and to join industry related groups.'

3 Calculate costs

'Changing career may involve starting at a more junior position and taking a pay cut,' says Shelley. 'Research online to see what the market rate is for starting positions in your chosen field as well as potential salary increases you may hope for as you progress. Be realistic about the impact on your finances and make sure you're in a secure position financially before beginning your job search.'

2 Do groundwork

'Find out all you can about your chosen field. If you know anyone already working in that area, quiz them about it; they may also know about upcoming job opportunities,' advises Shelley.



DID YOU KNOW?

More than nine in 10 parents encourage their kids to save, according to research by Halifax. However, while it found 16% of children report saving all their pocket money, some 17% say they don't put away a penny.

While self-employed applicants will need up to three years of accounts.'

3 Rushing in with no research

'When choosing what type of mortgage to get, take your time to explore all of the options open to you. For example, some people opt for a fixed-rate mortgage as they want to know they'll pay the same amount each month,' he adds. 'But everyone's circumstances are different so find what's best for you. And always shop around; comparison sites make this process easy as they gather information about numerous mortgage options and present them in a clear, jargon-free manner.' In addition to these steps, you may find it useful to speak to a mortgage broker too.



Best buy!

DEAL OF THE WEEK

You can pick up Palmolive Aroma Moments So Luminous Shower Gel (250ml), which has a touch of luxurious oil of macadamia and peony extract, for less at Tesco. Snap it up for a limited time only. WAS £1.80, NOW £1 until 29 September 2020. Available online with your grocery shop (tesco.com) and in store. Subject to availability.

If you love to win prizes then visit...

comps.womansownmagazine.co.uk



Doggy days out

Every dog-friendly holiday starts with the same question: where should you take the pup for a walk? We round up our favourite trails

WIZARD WALK AT ALDERLEY EDGE – CHESHIRE

Known for: A popular trail that tells a magical tale

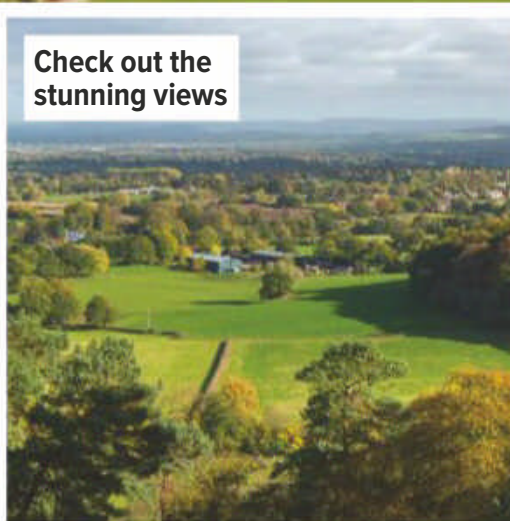
Learn about a local legend dating back to the 1750s on an easy-access circular walk in the heart of the Cheshire countryside.

The tale goes that a farmer was taking a white mare to sell at Macclesfield market. Walking along the Edge, he reached a spot known as 'Thief's Hole', where an older man stopped him and offered money for the horse. He refused at first but then, after failing to sell the mare at market, accepted the offer. The man (a wizard, no less!)

waved a wand, uttered a spell and opened a rock to reveal iron gates. They entered a cavern filled with sleeping warriors ready to fight should England fall. Legend has it, the wizard was Merlin and the men were King Arthur and his army.

It's an awe-inspiring story to tell the children on a family stroll. One of the National Trust's most popular walks, this flat, surfaced route with gentle slopes is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Stormy Point offers stunning views and is set around woodlands and waterfalls.

Check out the
stunning views



CLUMBER PARK – NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Known for: A woodland haven with a canine café

Marvel at the picturesque country house of Clumber Park while wandering through 3,800 acres of woodland. Stroll over to the South Lawns for excellent views of the Chapel over the tranquil lake. If you're looking for the perfect photo opportunity, the Pleasure Grounds – with their patchwork quilt of

autumnal colours – offer a beautiful backdrop.

Relax at the brilliantly named 'Central Bark', Clumber's dog-friendly café just outside the walled garden. Continue to enjoy fresh air in the outdoor seating area, which offers water bowls for dogs. Sleepy pooches can also retreat to the indoor area for a nap or to play with the toys generously provided.

Soak up the
gorgeous colours



BODNANT GARDENS – CONWY, WALES

Known for: A nature lover's paradise

Nestled in the picturesque market town of Conwy, the historic Bodnant Gardens are home to hundreds of native and exotic trees, which burn bright with scarlets and oranges during the autumn.

Collect a Champion Tree leaflet for a self-led trail or join a guided autumn colour walk, where you'll pass towering conifers from America and cherries from Asia. With 80 acres to explore, from formal gardens to wild meadows, this is a special way to spend a day, however able you are.

Pets are very welcome year-round, with 'Wag Wednesday' evening walkies taking place in high season (from April through to late September). In fact, short leads and poo bags are available to borrow free-of-charge from the visitor welcome centre, just in case you forget anything.

For wilder walks, you can also visit neighbouring Parc Farm on the Great Orme in Llandudno with your dog. The footpaths are open from June to December, with a polite request to keep pooches on leads for the safety of the livestock.

Always check the latest travel guidance before booking a trip

GIANT'S RING – BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

Known for: An ancient monument in an Irish oasis

Follow the trail from the River Lagan, heading deep into woodland, farmland and lush gardens, out onto the ancient Neolithic earth henge of the Giant's Ring. This impressive structure is 180m across, with a stone passage tomb at its centre. The site is steeped in rich history. The henge is 4,000 years old, while nearby Shaw's Bridge dates back to the Stone Age.

With your pup in tow, explore the Minnowburn woodlands, with their magnificent beeches that



Take long strolls through rich woodland

are surrounded by a fascinating array of fungi in the autumn. Just be cautious in keeping away from these forest fruits, though, to avoid upset stomachs.

The Belvoir Oaks are newer additions, planted with acorns from the Belvoir Forest, establishing a link with Ireland's ancient trees. Keep an eye on the rolling river, as you might spot spawning salmon or sea trout.

Fully escorted tours

Woman's Own travel offers



Includes tours and visits worth £302

8 days from £1,079pp

Florence & Tuscany

Departures from April to October 2021

Price includes:

- Discover the city of Florence on a fascinating guided tour
- Experience the wonders of the Uffizi art gallery, with a reserved pre-timed entry to avoid queues
- Explore Siena on a guided tour
- Savour the views from the striking hilltop village of San Gimignano
- See Pisa, its Leaning Tower and explore charming Lucca
- Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all hotel transfers
- Seven nights in four-star and three-star superior accommodation, with breakfast and four dinners
- The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout



8 days from £1,029pp

Sardinia - Alghero, Costa Smeralda & Corsica

Departures from April to October 2021

Price includes:

- Discover charming traditional villages of inland Sardinia
- Explore medieval Alghero
- Tour Italian-influenced Bonifacio in French Corsica
- Discover the ancient Phoenician ruins at Tharros
- Visit a family-owned wine estate
- Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all hotel transfers
- Seven nights in four-star accommodation, with breakfast and four dinners
- The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager

REASSURINGLY RIVIERA
BECAUSE YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO US*

Change your booking for free up to 45 days before you travel when you book a new holiday by 30 September.

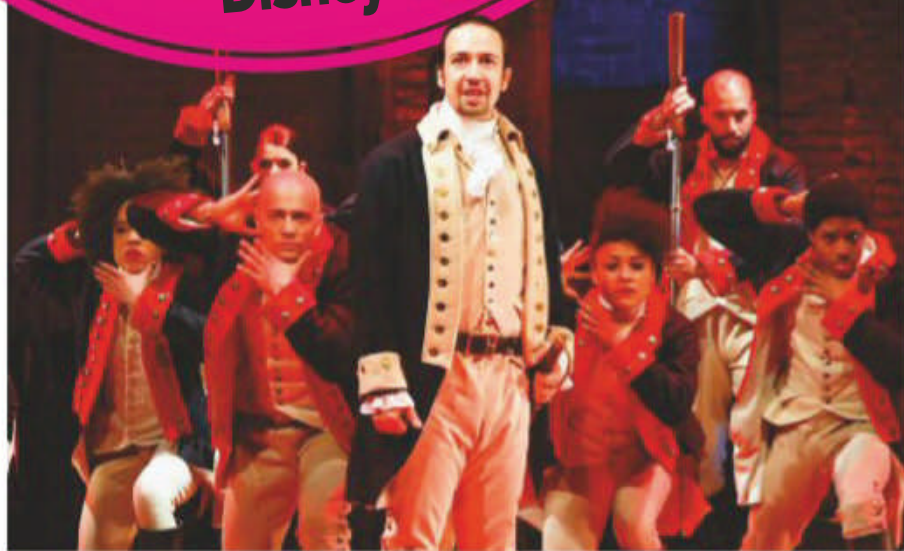
To book or for a free brochure, call 01283 742395 or go to ownriviera.co.uk

*See our website for full details. Prices are per person, based on two sharing and subject to finite availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Offer operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Travel Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 34130, a company wholly independent of Woman's Own, published by Future plc. Prices correct at time of print.



TV PICKS

Check out these great new shows and films on Disney+!



HAMILTON

Here's a chance to see the award-winning musical in all its toe-tapping glory. Using rap, hip-hop and R&B, it tells the story of one of the USA's founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton. The show's writer Lin-Manuel Miranda, who played Lee Scoresby in *His Dark Materials* on BBC1, stars in the lead role.



ARTEMIS FOWL

Sir Kenneth Branagh directs this beautiful adaptation of the Artemis Fowl fantasy novels that have enthralled countless readers since the first book came out in 2001. Ferdia Shaw plays 12-year-old Artemis, who tries to track down a fairy artefact to save his kidnapped dad (Colin Farrell). Dame Judi Dench plays the boss of the fairy police.



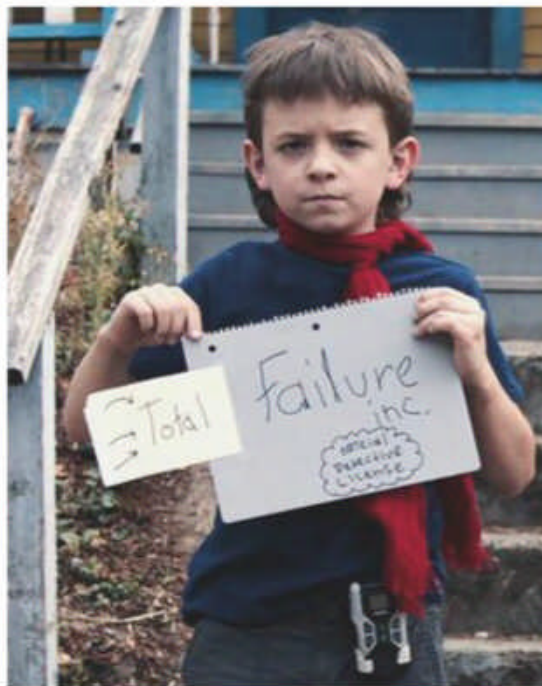
MUPPETS NOW

Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear and co are back with this magazine-style show. There's a range of segments, including crazy experiments with the bumbling Dr Bunsen Honeydew and his assistant Beaker and Kermit's talk-show slot Mup Close and Personal, in which he interviews guest stars, including Ru Paul!



MAGIC CAMP

This one-off comedy stars disillusioned magician Andy Tuckerman (Adam Devine), whose career has hit the skids. But when he returns to Magic Camp, where he spent much of his youth, to pass on his knowledge to a bunch of rookie magicians, he soon begins to rediscover his love of magic and illusion.



TIMMY FAILURE: MISTAKES WERE MADE

Meet Timmy Failure, the best detective in Portland, Oregon, or so he believes, in this sweet one-off comedy. As he attempts to solve cases, including the mysterious disappearance of a classmate's schoolbag, he carries out his investigations by getting about on his mum's Segway and with his partner – a giant polar bear called Total – never far behind!



THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN

Combining live action and CGI, this adventure follows 400lb silverback gorilla Ivan (voiced by Sam Rockwell) as he plots to escape from the shopping mall where he lives in captivity. Bryan Cranston stars as the mall's owner Mack and other famous voices include Angelina Jolie, Helen Mirren and Danny DeVito.



SOCIETY OF SECOND-BORN ROYALS

After being packed off to boarding school, rebellious teenage royal Sam and four other second-born royals discover they have unique super-human abilities. This one-off film follows the teens as they join a secret society, led by instructor James, who teaches them how to learn to harness their newfound powers and save the world!



THE MANDALORIAN

Set in the *Star Wars* universe, this eight-part series follows the adventures of lone bounty hunter Din Djarin (Pedro Pascal), aka The Mandalorian, who's offered a fortune to track down and capture The Child, dubbed by fans as 'Baby Yoda'. But who is behind the assignment? And will Din Djarin carry out his assignment?

COMING SOON



Urban Myths, Sky Arts

Mark Addy is set to step into shoes of comedian Les Dawson when the comedy series returns. He'll appear in a bizarre tale written by *Inside No.9*'s Steve Pemberton which will tell the story of the time Les spent in Paris during the 1950s.

Rick Stein's Cornwall, BBC2

The celebrity chef will share some secrets from the place he calls home in his upcoming new series. In each episode, he'll be going off the beaten track, away from tourist hotspots, to champion the county's food, history, music, art and culture. Every episode will also see him cook a simple dish inspired by his trips.

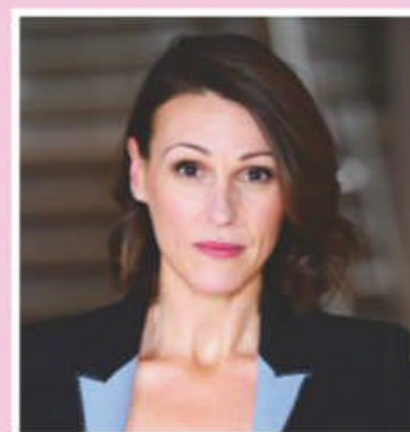


Riviera, Sky Atlantic

When the glitzy drama returns for a third series, look out for new cast member Rupert Graves. He joins Julia Stiles to play Georgina's charismatic new ally Gabriel Hirsch, as the pair attempt to unravel a conspiracy involving stolen artworks that takes them from Venice to Argentina.

I Am Victoria, C4

When the anthology drama series *I Am* returns with three new tales, *Doctor Foster* and *Gentleman Jack* actress Suranne Jones will star alongside Ashley Walters in this story which explores female themes, including trust, relationships and mental health.



Create unforgettable poses with this adorable twosome!

Mia & Sparkle

A
So Truly Real®
Exclusive Baby Girl Doll

Mia features:

A perfectly weighted
cloth body

Soft hand-
rooted hair

Lifelike *RealTouch®*
vinyl skin

These collectables are
not intended for children
under 14.



Mia is
17" long

Sparkle is
25" long



A little girl and her magical best friend

The moment you introduced *Mia* to *Sparkle*, she smiled so big it melted your heart. Instantly she was cosy and content, snuggled up against the magical unicorn's pillowy body. The sight was so adorable you couldn't resist. Before you knew it, you were cuddling up with the sweethearts yourself!

Created by doll artist Violet Parker, *Mia* is perfectly realised in our incredibly lifelike *RealTouch®* vinyl. Her delicate features are handpainted and she's *weighted* to feel amazingly realistic when you hold her. She's also completely poseable: position her to hold *Sparkle* in her arms, use the unicorn as a pillow, or create any number of other darling displays. Plus, her custom ruffled outfit features a unicorn design and matching headband for a look that's nothing short of magical.

Bring this precious pair home today

Accompanied by a Certificate of Authenticity and our famous 365-day money-back guarantee, *Mia & Sparkle* can be yours for just 4 interest-free instalments of £39.99 – that's only £159.96 (plus £9.99 S&S)*. Pay nothing now – simply complete and return your Reservation Application today!

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- Featuring *RealTouch®* vinyl skin to feel the most lifelike
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 - Interest-free monthly payments
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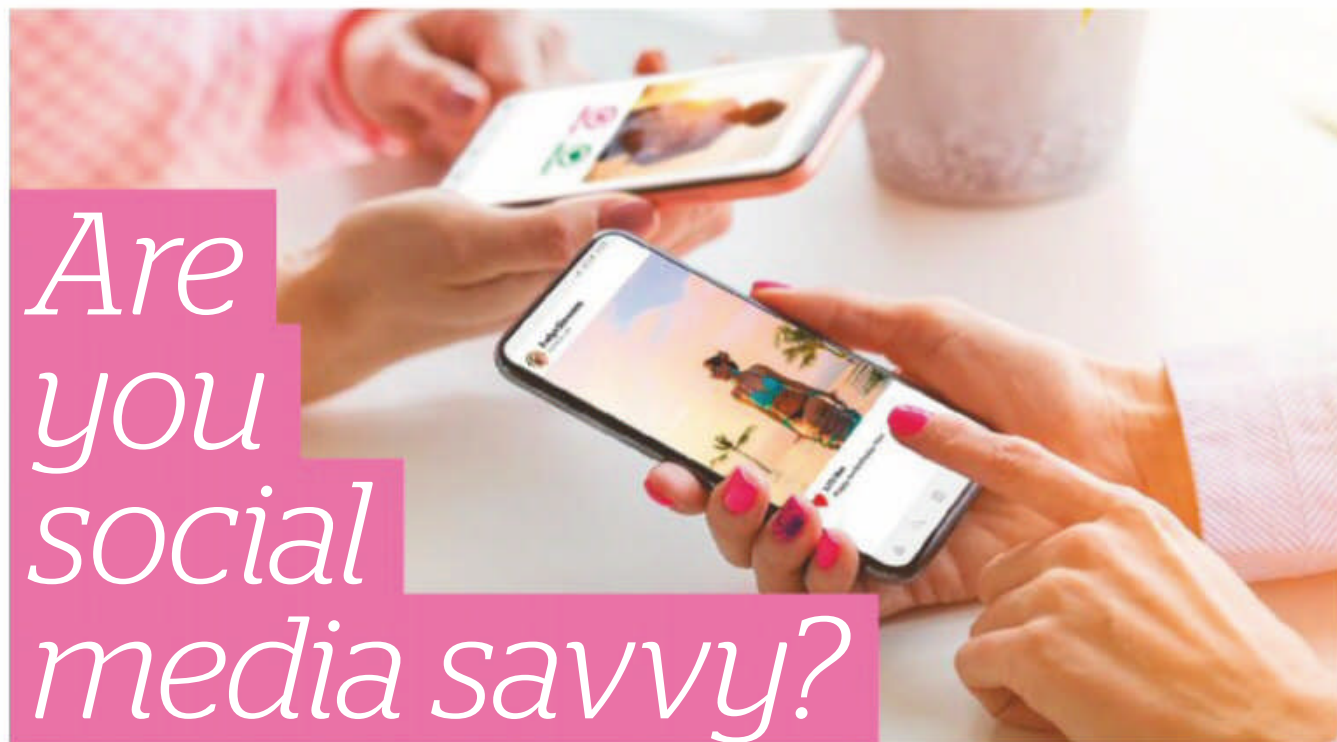
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Ask *yourself*



Are you social media savvy?

Some of us have a great way of balancing every social media app out there – while some of us can hardly type out a text...

1 You are throwing a birthday party, how do you let people know?

- A** By writing out and sending paper invites **B** By sending everyone a text **C** By making a WhatsApp group **D** Make a Facebook event and put it on your Instagram

2 You want a new cleaning product, how do you do your research?

- A** Call your friends up **B** Have a quick scroll on Google **C** Ask people on Facebook **D** Find out what Mrs Hinch uses

3 Where do you get your holiday inspiration from?

- A** Brochures **B** What friends recommend and post on Facebook **C** I have some pictures saved on Pinterest **D** Instagram influencers, of course!

4 What do you do with family photos?

- A** Get them printed out and framed **B** They're all on my phone **C** A couple of them are on Facebook **D** They're everywhere!

5 What is Snapchat?

- A** An angry conversation **B** No idea, but my kids have it on their phone **C** It's something to do with pictures? **D** An app where you can send photos to friends

6 What does it mean when you've been 'trolled'?

- A** Doesn't a troll live under a bridge? **B** It's a type of scam **C** It's when celebs get called out **D** You're the target of unwarranted abuse online

7 What does the term 'retweet' mean?

- A** When birds sing on repeat? **B** I think it's from an app **C** It's to do with Twitter **D** When you share someone else's post on Twitter

How did you score?

MOSTLY As

Social media stranger

They say ignorance is bliss, and you prefer to do things the old-fashioned way by talking to friends over the phone. It's nice that you print out your photos, but do you ever feel like you're missing out or want to contact old friends? Social media can be a blessing, rather than a curse!

MOSTLY Bs

Not-so-smartphone user

Your family and friends are lucky you even have a phone, otherwise you'd do without! Your phone is for texting and taking family photos – not for any of these apps. But some social media can be centred around you, not others. Apps like Pinterest or Instagram can be a great way of sharing photos with like-minded people – and see what family and friends are up to.

MOSTLY Cs

Part-time poster

Your social media knowledge and usage is probably the healthiest in this quiz. You're a part-time poster when it comes to being online, but that's OK as you don't feel like you're missing out. No-one needs to know every app or buzzword. You're doing you – and it works. Enjoy your time online safely!

MOSTLY Ds

You're an expert

Let's face it, social media is your life! You have to see what other people are using. It's OK to like and enjoy social media, but when does it become overwhelming? Too much screen time can be bad. Set aside time for the apps that you care about, and monitor what you share with other people.

PUZZLE BR

**TRY TO
COMPLETE
THIS ONE
IN 20
MINS**

Clues & arrows

Fill in the clues in the direction of the arrows

Air passage		Quieten		Afloat (2,3)		Pensive poem		Military alliance (inits)		Full-dress military hat
				Prepare, write out (a plan) (4,2)						
Gloss		Australian bird		Small quantity of spirits		Allow to enter (3,2)		Bridges, actor brother of Jeff		Holler
					Vestibule					
de vie, brandy	US state bordering Quebec						Seed-bud of a potato			
			Women		Meat of a deer		Inflamed eyelids		Enquire	
Old, inner-city block of flats	Wiped out, deleted	Harp on at		Optical, of sight						
								Fire cinders		Simple throwing weapon
Male sheep				Nothing, nil		Himalayan oxen				
									Source of minerals	
Regular glossy publications		Dennis, comedian/ TV host				Foot protector				
Betting term (4-2)		Greek god of love					Historical period			
						Manipulator				

WORDSEARCH

N	E	A	G	O	I	N	G		
R	H	O	N	G	L	O	R		
H	P	I	N	G	L	S	E		
A	D	O	V	E	R	I	A		
P	R	I	N	T	E	R	A		
T	E	A	R	I	U	R			
A	R	H	N	T	L				
R	E	S	E	N					
W	E	L	C	O	M	I	N	G	

SUDOKU

4	1	6
2	5	3
5	6	2
3	4	1
1	3	4
6	2	5
5	3	2
4	1	6

CLUES & ARROWS

H	A	O	N	B
D	U	C	T	P
S	S	E	T	S
S	H	E	N	L
M	A	I	N	E
E	A	P	T	A
F	V	I	S	A
T	E	N	E	M
R	A	M	N	Y
M	A	G	A	Z
S	L	E	S	S
E	R	O	S	E
O	D	D	S	E

CROSSWORD

C	B	J	C	R	F	W
C	L	E	A	R	L	O
S	C	E	N	E	R	I
S	K	T	I	R	S	O
P	L	A	S	C	H	E
O	A	M	O	I	D	E
C	O	L	D	B	L	O
K	A	V	M	C		
T	S	A	R	C	L	A
H	K	L	H	L	O	S
R	E	U	N	I	O	N
A	R	E	S	R	I	
A	S	U	A	L	D	E
Y	S	L		D	Y	N

Puzzle solutions

Quick & easy

If you really don't have much time to spare, give your brain a break with one of these.

**CAN YOU
DO THESE
IN 10 MINS
EACH?**

1	3	4			
		1	5	6	
		2	4	1	
2	5	3			

Sudoku

To solve the puzzle, each 2x3 box, each column and each row must contain the numbers 1 to 6.

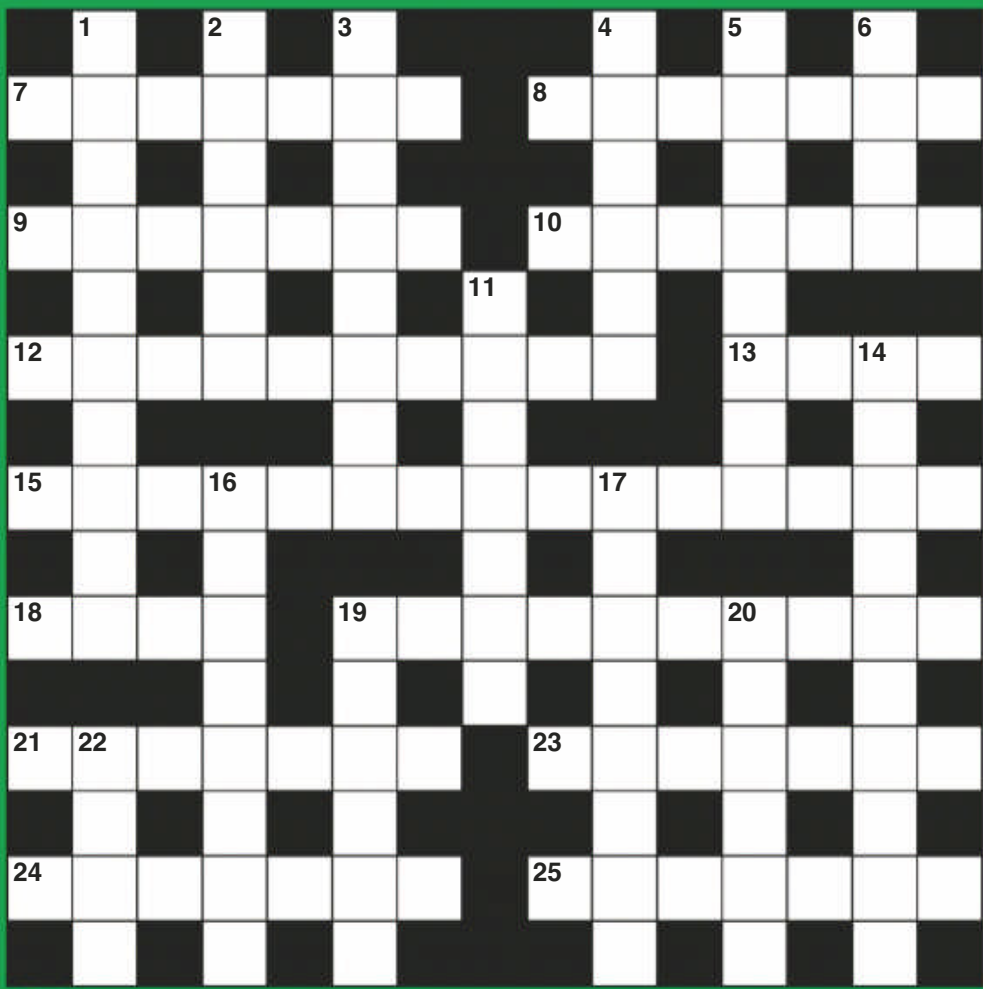
W E L C O M I N G
P U G L Y S E N N
Y R H N L R I D O
P T E A A R I U R
P R N T E R Y A T
A D O V T R T A H
H P I U G Y L S E
R H O N D L O C R
S E A G O I N G N

Wordsearch

The answer is the word missing from the grid.

ANGRY
COLD
HAIRY
HAPPY
ISLAND
NORTHERN
PRETTY
PROUD

SEAGOING
SHIVERING
STRANGE
TALL
TATTOOED
UGLY
WELCOMING



DO IT
IN 30
MINS?

Crossword

Put your feet up and have a go at this classic

ACROSS

- 7 Evidently (7)
- 8 Intoxicating drink (7)
- 9 Countryside views (7)
- 10 Construction worker (7)
- 12 Organised activities for young children (10)
- 13 Move through water (4)
- 15 Lack of pity or emotion (4-11)
- 18 Russian ruler (4)
- 19 Dilapidated (7-3)
- 21 Old friends' get-together (7)
- 23 Affected shyness (7)
- 24 In the customary way (2,5)
- 25 Progress, advance (7)

DOWN

- 1 Disapproving glances (5,5)
- 2 Cheerful in manner (6)
- 3 To do with office work (8)
- 4 Female garment (6)
- 5 Start where another left off (6,2)
- 6 Stirred from sleep (4)
- 11 Subtraction (7)
- 14 Talk, debate (10)
- 16 Period without daylight (8)
- 17 Given a job (8)
- 19 Of group singing (6)
- 20 Seaside ride animal (6)
- 22 Simple to do (4)

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Peter McDermott,
Head Gardener

Peter



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you garden
gardeners at the heart of it

THIS WEEK'S HOT LIST

The movies and books not to miss



Film

David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet

Out 28 Sep

Sir David Attenborough delivers a stirring call to arms in this eye-opening documentary film, which brings his passion, integrity and deep wisdom to the global environmental crisis. Drawing on footage from a seven-decade career making groundbreaking TV, as well as some startling facts and figures, Sir David reflects on the seismic changes to the natural world he has seen during his lifetime and urges us all to make a difference before it is too late.

Book

Monogamy by Sue Miller

(£16.99, Bloomsbury, HB)

In her latest spellbinding read, Sue Miller pulls back the curtain of idealism that has obscured a complex relationship. Drawn to bookshop owner Graham, Annie felt secure in the strength of their marriage. Until, that is, a family tragedy leads her to learn something that forever alters her perspective of him, of their relationship and of herself.



DVD



Sulphur and White

RRP: £11.99

Based on the true story of City trader and mountaineer David Tait, a man whose professional success masks traumatic secrets as he struggles to come to terms with childhood abuse. Set on the trading floor in 2008, this drama unpicks what lies behind his assured facade. It stars Mark Stanley (left), Emily Beecham, Anna Friel and Dougray Scott.



Your STARS

22-28 September 2020

Discover your destiny with Sally Morgan, our expert astrologer



Aries

21 Mar - 20 Apr

Communicate using logic and intuition. Focus on listening more and you'll learn surprising things about new friends; you might meet a soulmate amongst the crowd.



Libra

23 Sep - 23 Oct

A friend or family member may ask you for a loan with no intention of repaying it. Make sure all of your bills are covered first if you choose to help out.



Taurus

21 Apr - 20 May

Caring, yet forthright, you solve problems and put things back on track sooner than later. Best plan ahead with your partner, as romance beckons under a moonlit sky.



Scorpio

24 Oct - 22 Nov

Being popular is nice, but that becomes difficult when folk start to monopolise your time. Find a way to let them know you're busy, yet you value their friendship.



Gemini

21 May - 20 Jun

Have you considered how alternative therapies could help you relax and to regain your focus? This could be really helpful when you're in a spin and can't settle.



Sagittarius

23 Nov - 22 Dec

You may be enduring a situation that makes you feel quite uncomfortable. Things don't always work according to plan, so focus on thinking of a solution in a positive way.



Cancer

21 Jun - 22 Jul

If you have something important to discuss with your partner and you're thinking about them intensely, you might feel like arranging a special night of romance.



Capricorn

23 Dec - 20 Jan

Don't sit wondering what opportunities will come your way – open the door and walk through it. A chance meeting may lead to finding a new hobby companion.



Leo

23 Jul - 22 Aug

A donation to charity and a trip to the local tip will make you feel you've accomplished so much. Don't keep things you no longer need, clear out the clutter.



Aquarius

21 Jan - 19 Feb

Try feng shui, replace some of your furniture or move it around to restore balance to your life. Swap the position of the bed or change the colour of your kitchen....



Virgo

23 Aug - 22 Sep

Introspection can help you realise what you want from someone or a relationship. Your boundaries can be an issue; it may be you've let people cross them too much.



Pisces

20 Feb - 20 Mar

A soft and gentle approach with another person is best, as they are sensitive too. Don't underestimate your powers of persuasion where a business matter is concerned.

Ask Alexa 'what is my horoscope today?'

MATT LEBLANC

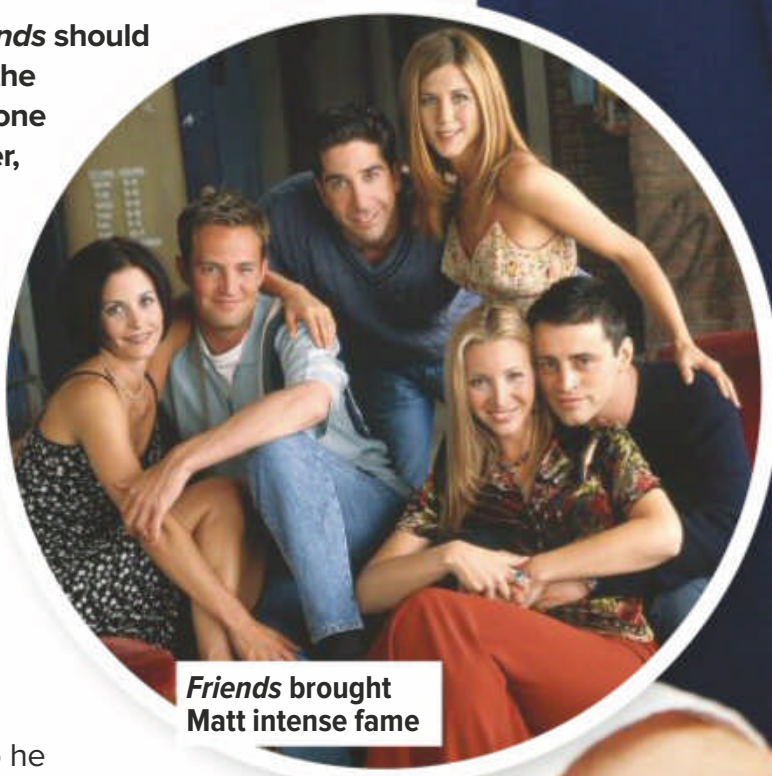
'I didn't feel like BEING FUNNY'

At the height of *Friends* mania, the man behind Joey Tribbiani almost turned his back on fame

In 2004, the cast of *Friends* should have been celebrating the series finale becoming one of the highest-rated ever, with 52.5 million people tuning in to see the gang for the last time.

But that year Matt LeBlanc was forced to choose between the intense fame playing Joey Tribbiani for a decade had brought him and his daughter Marina Pearl, who was diagnosed with a rare brain disorder shortly after her birth.

Unsurprisingly, Matt, 53, picked his daughter – who he shares with ex-wife Melissa McKnight – and he says the decision was an easy one. He said, 'I didn't feel like being funny.'



Friends brought Matt intense fame



I had a lot going on in my personal life.'

Marina was diagnosed with dysplasia when she was just 11 months old. The disorder affected her ability to crawl and walk and also caused seizures. Matt insists that being there for his little girl was more important to him than enjoying the life of an A-list actor.

'I knew I wasn't missing out on anything,' Matt explained. 'I had dabbled with the celebrity world. I'd partied a bit. But there wasn't anything there that could fulfil me. I mean, I have beers in the fridge at home.'

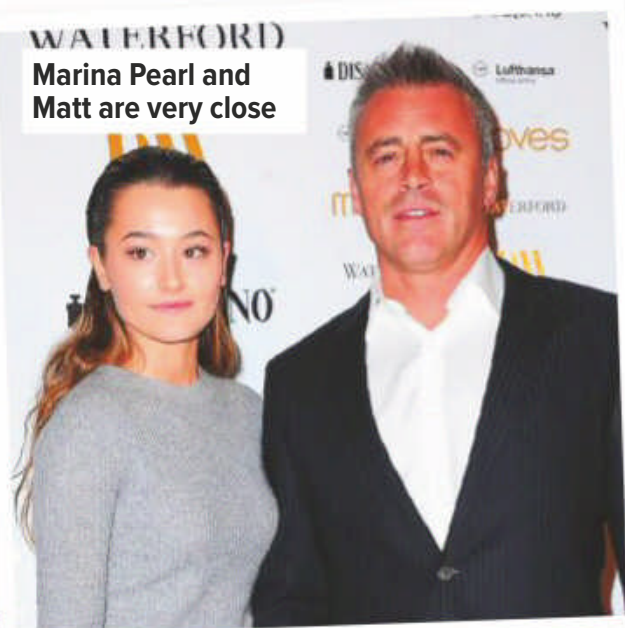
While Marina thankfully outgrew her dysplasia by the time she was two years old, Matt admits that she's the most important thing in his world. He added, 'She's a daddy's girl. She can wrap me around her little finger. I'm powerless.'

And it seems that even Marina is a huge *Friends* fan, and Matt says they'll often watch episodes of the hit sitcom together.

'She loves to ask me questions,' he said. 'She'll say, "Was that real? Did you really eat that? What did that taste like? Ooh, you ate that off the floor? That's gross! You're so funny, Dad!"'

'There wasn't anything there that could fulfil me'

Marina Pearl and Matt are very close



WORDS: JACK WHITE. PHOTOS: GETTY, ALAMY, NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES

Judging a book

Change was definitely on Tiffany's mind, but was the village ready for her big plans?

So, what did we think of *The Regency Romance*?' Josie asked the members of the book group seated at her dining table.

'Enjoyable. The characters came to life,' Maggie said.

Cath giggled. 'I wouldn't mind a duke sweeping me off my feet!'

New member Tiffany took a deep breath. 'It wasn't my thing at all, I'm afraid. I prefer novels that challenge perceptions and reflect real life. How about something more literary next time? The latest Booker, maybe?'

She went on to enthuse about several prize-winning novels.

'We could write our own reviews and take turns in reading them out,' Tiffany continued.

Her suggestions were met with silence and bemused expressions. Tiffany blushed and bit her bottom lip. 'I mean... only if you *want* to.'

Josie glanced at the stack of library books ready to hand out as the next read. *Cornish Cove Cafe* might not have won any prizes, but it was by an author they'd read before and enjoyed. Frivolous cover illustrations and titles often belied poignant plots. She hoped Tiffany would give it a chance.

Josie cleared her throat. 'Well, that's certainly worth thinking about. Now, who'd like a cup of tea?'

After the meeting, while Josie was washing up, her thoughts drifted to three weeks previously. From her bedroom window, she'd watched a removal lorry draw up outside the house opposite and a small car pull into its driveway.

A lad, five or six years old she guessed,

and a young woman got out and hurried into the house. A few hours later, Josie knocked and introduced herself.

'Nice to meet you,' the young woman said. 'I'm Tiffany Meadows.' She turned to the boy hovering in the hallway. 'And this is my son, Lucas.'

A pang of nostalgia tinged with sadness settled in Josie's chest as she took in the boy's appearance. The tight black curls and eyes the colour of peanut butter reminded her of Elijah at that age.

She smiled at the boy and shifted her gaze back to his mother. 'Welcome to the village and do let me know if you need anything.'

It was then that Tiffany had said she wanted to throw herself into the community. She'd asked about local groups and clubs, so Josie invited her

to the book group.

With a sigh Josie brought her mind back to the present and finished the washing up. She picked the book up from the dining table and headed for the lounge. It was time to escape to Cornwall, away from village life.



Two days later, Josie was doing some gardening when Tiffany, a little breathless in running gear, stopped at the gate and pulled out her earbuds.

'Josie. Hi,' she said. 'Can I ask you something?'

What was she going to come up with now? Aerobics instead of the usual keep fit in the church hall, energetic enough for

the average age of those attending?

She'd already ruffled feathers at the residents' association meeting by suggesting an alternative autumn celebration instead of the usual harvest festival at the local primary school. The vicar's eyebrows had almost disappeared into his receding hairline.

'I wondered if you'd have Lucas for me tomorrow for a couple of hours? I didn't realise until yesterday that he's got a half day,' Tiffany said.

'Well, I...' Josie looked down at the secateurs in her gloved hand. She hadn't looked after a child in years.

'I... I've got an important appointment and no one else to ask at such short notice.'

Josie frowned. Nervousness seemed to have replaced Tiffany's usual self-confidence.

'In that case, of course,' she said, hoping he'd have homework to keep him busy.

Tiffany let out a relieved sigh. 'Brilliant. I'll let his teacher know.'



Josie picked Lucas up from the school playground and they walked along the lane lined with hedgerows that in the warmer months would be full of fragrant honeysuckle.

After asking if he liked school, to which he simply answered, 'Yes,' and whether he had homework – that was a 'No' – she



with tears. 'Sorry, it's been a bit of an emotional day.'

'Oh, dear,' Josie said, a little flustered. 'Why don't you sit down? Would you like a cup of tea?'

'No thanks,' Tiffany replied, but sat on the sofa. 'I'll be OK,' she said, sounding anything but. Josie noticed Lucas' face cloud over.

'Lucas,' Josie said, going to the kitchen tap and filling a plastic jug, 'could you top up the birdbath and then go and check that we locked the door of the greenhouse properly?'

Once he was out of earshot Tiffany said, 'I've been in court.'

'Court?' Josie sank into a chair.

'Oh, I haven't done anything wrong. It was

but I had enough from our house sale to make a fresh start. We had no reason to stay where we were. My parents live in Spain and Lucas wasn't settling at school. It's early days, but he seems to be doing fine at the new one.'

'He seems happy enough and you've certainly made... an impact.'

Tiffany pulled a face. 'Maybe too much of one? I got the feeling at the book group...'

'Oh, we needed a bit of a shake-up. In fact, I checked and the library has enough copies of the latest Women's Prize, so I'll suggest it to the group next time we meet.'

'That's great. Mind you, I'm racing through *Cornish Cove Cafe*. I'll never judge a book by its cover again.'

Me neither, thought Josie, thinking how she'd misjudged Tiffany. 'And there's nothing wrong with reinvention if it means building confidence, but don't destroy your gentle nature by pushing too hard.'

It had been Elijah's downfall. The stressful city job, the pressure to meet targets, the ridiculously long hours.

'Mummy!' Lucas shouted, charging in. 'I saw so many birds, Mummy!'

'How lovely.'

'I wish we had a garden like Josie's,' Lucas said.

Tiffany gave a rueful nod. 'I need to sort ours out. It's full of weeds and the grass desperately needs cutting.'

Josie smiled. 'Oh, I don't do it all myself these days. My nephew Elijah has recently started up a little gardening business. I could ask him to contact you, if you like. His prices are very reasonable.'

'Cool,' Tiffany said. 'When it's in better shape, I'll have a garden party to celebrate.'

After they'd gone, Josie walked into the kitchen and looked out onto the garden.

Nurturing the plants and vegetables had helped both her and Elijah bond and heal after her sister's death. With a father who'd disappeared before he was born, Elijah had come into unmarried Josie's care.

With a warm glow, she thought about her nephew now. How being close to nature had also helped him recover after he quit his job.

She glanced at the book on the kitchen table. She had one chapter left and felt sure that, like the characters in the story, Tiffany and Elijah were heading for a happy ending.

THE END

Claire Buckle, 2020

rooted around for something else to say.

'Would you like to help me pick tomatoes and beans in my heated greenhouse?'

He shrugged. 'Our garden's messy. Daddy always cut the grass at our old house and we didn't have a greenhouse.'

Tiffany hadn't volunteered any information about Lucas' father, so Josie decided not to pursue the subject, and within a couple of minutes they reached her house.

Once inside, she gave Lucas a glass of homemade elderflower cordial, which he sipped warily, picked up a wicker basket from the lean-to and led him towards the greenhouse.

She told him the names of some plants, let him pick the ripe tomatoes and showed him the cane wigwam of runner beans.

'We have to hunt among the leaves because the beans play hide-and-seek,' she said, remembering she'd told Elijah the same thing when he was little. 'Let's see how many you can find.'

'We picked loads, look,' Lucas said, pointing at the wicker basket, when Tiffany, dressed in a smart navy suit, arrived to collect him.

'Wow!' she said. 'And thanks, Josie. I'll repay the favour somehow.'

'No problem,' Josie said, handing over a brown paper bag full of tomatoes and beans. 'For you and Lucas.'

'That's so kind,' Tiffany's eyes filled

a custody hearing.'

'Did everything go OK?' Josie asked, tentatively.

Tiffany nodded. 'Joe and I have been granted joint custody, which is fine. Lucas will be delighted when I tell him he's staying with his dad next weekend. But I was dreading seeing my ex. He makes me feel like "timid Tiffany" all over again.'

Josie frowned. 'What do you mean?'

Tiffany sighed. 'Joe's such a gregarious person, whereas I've always been shy. We were the typical opposites-attract couple and he loved being the centre of attention.'

'But as the years went on, I seemed to be in his shadow more and more. Once, during a row, he called me "timid Tiffany", said I was boring and had nothing to say.'

She opened her handbag and pulled out a tissue, pinching it to her nose.

'Of course, he'd met someone else and was trying to blame me for the break-up.'

'I'm so sorry. How horrible,' Josie said, moving onto the sofa and gently squeezing Tiffany's hand.

'After we split, I decided no one was ever going to think of me as timid again.'

She gave a little laugh. 'I wasn't lucky enough to inherit a cafe in Cornwall,

'I decided no one was ever going to think of me as timid again'

After a town council in London announced they were taking meat off the menu at their functions, we ask...

Should only vegan food be served at events?



No

‘People don’t like being told what they can and can’t do’

Rachel Aceso, 39, is CEO of Nature Provides. She lives in East Sussex with her husband, 40, and their two children, aged eight and five.

Taking away people’s choice when it comes to food being served at events won’t work. People don’t like being told what they can and can’t do. The only thing this ‘ban’ on meat will do is make them annoyed and less likely to listen to positive messages that people are trying to send about a vegetarian or vegan diet.

My own family consumes meat on a regular basis, but I make sure it’s always organic and bought from a reputable butcher that sells sustainably farmed produce. We try to limit waste and use as much of the animal as we can, even down to the bones for broth. It’s incredibly important to me that my children know where their food comes from and they understand how bacon and sausages get on their plate.



Rachel says education is key

Yes, the way animals that are mass-farmed and reared in abhorrent conditions so that supermarkets can stack their shelves high with sub-standard food has to stop. But education is the way forward, not rules and restrictions.

We need to tell people what they can do to help, and while going vegetarian or vegan is definitely one answer, giving up meat doesn’t have to be the only option. Shopping smartly, reducing your meat intake and learning how to reduce waste can all help, too.

Yes

‘You’re not going to perish without a beef burger’

Lex Rigby, 37, is Campaigns Manager for vegan charity Viva! and lives in Bristol.

I’ve been vegan for 17 years (before it became fashionable!) and I think it’s great that people are finally paying attention to how cruelly our meat is farmed, the environmental impacts of it, and the potential health benefits of cutting it out of our diets.

Some may argue that making events vegetarian- or vegan-only takes away their choice, but as a vegan at events, I’ve gone hungry many times – or had to stick to chips (assuming they’re cooked in vegetable oil, not lard). Where was my choice then? Plus, these days, the range of vegan options is far superior. How about ‘steaks’ made out of watermelon? And burgers made with mushrooms? At the



Lex relishes the opportunity

very least, you’ve got to try it, just to see what it tastes like! Hopefully, when people realise that it’s not just ‘rabbit food’ and, actually, a vegan option can be delicious, they’ll realise that meat doesn’t have to be the staple food in every single meal. Having only vegan options to choose from (it’s only for one night, you’re not going to perish without a beef burger for a few hours!) might nudge everyone in the right direction – and, from there, we can start to educate each other about all the other benefits that come from saying goodbye to meat.

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Jan 8 2021	The BIG Carry on New Year Party The D-Day Darlings Trio, James Williams Showman, Roy G Hemmings' Dictionary of Soul, Sounds Imperial's New Year Party	Warner Bembridge, Isle of Wight	£309 ^{PP}
Mar 26 2021	The BIG 60s to Soul & Motown Seaside Festival Angelo Starr & The Team, The Dreamers, Original Jukebox Heroes, Sammy Lomax as Dusty, Soul/Motown singers Steve Simone & Sharn Adela, Sounds Imperial, PLUS Chris Nott - Stars In Their Eyes' David Essex & Cherie Jade as Diana Ross	Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast	£329 ^{PP}
Apr 23 2021	The BIG 60s to Soul & Motown Spring Festival Marty Wilde & The Wildcats, Memories of the Four Tops, New Amen Corner, The Lollypops & Moptops show, Glen Leon as the voice of Tom Jones, Little Miss 60s PLUS Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross & Stevie Wonder tributes	Warner Alvaston Hall, Cheshire	£399 ^{PP}
Sept 10 2021	The Ultimate 60s Summer Seaside Festival New Amen Corner & Mike D'Abo (formerly of Manfred Mann), Little Miss 60s, Dave Berry and the Cruisers, The Beached Boys, The Ultimate Everlys, The Revolvers, Sammy Lomax as Dusty, comedian Tank Sherman	Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight	£339 ^{PP}
Oct 1 2021	The BIG 60s, 70s Soul & Motown Autumn Festival Showaddywaddy, Roy G Hemmings Dictionary of Soul, New Amen Corner, Mud II, Glen Leon as the voice of Tom Jones, The Rag Dolls, Keith Slater's 60s Celebration, Nancy Ann Lee as Little Miss 60s & Soul/Motown singer Sharn Adela	Warner Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales	£399 ^{PP}
Nov 5 2021	60s to Soul & Motown BIG Christmas Party Memories of the Four Tops, The Revolvers, Nancy Ann Lee as Little Miss 60s, Keith Slater's 60s Celebration, Glen Leon as the voice of Tom Jones, Elvis through the Years PLUS James Brown & Luther Vandross tributes and comedy from Tucker	Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast	£329 ^{PP}

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