

The Northern Echo

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**HEALTH**

JANUARY 2006

**MEET  
THE DIET  
DOCTORS**

**ALTERNATIVES**

A happy  
new ear!

**CAROLE CAPLIN**

'The day I  
woke up and  
couldn't move'



**WIN** a luxury spa and sport break



# contents

**2 COMPETITION**

Win a luxury pampering for two

**3 LIFESTYLE**

The photographer who chose a spiritual cure

**4 RESOLUTIONS**

Dumping the junk food for juices

**5 TOP TIPS**

Three ways to help keep eyes healthy

**6 FAMILY**

Putting the joy back into childbirth

**10 CAROLE CAPLIN**

'The day I woke up and couldn't move'



**12 EXERCISE**

A year in the life of a novice runner

**14 NEW YEAR, NEW YOU**



Treatments for body and mind

**16 DIET**

The Trinny and Susannah of TV nutrition

**18 LIFE COACH**

The apple-a-day approach to 2006



Relax and recuperate in Matfen Hall's luxury spa

## WIN a luxury break at Matfen Hall

Got the post party blues? Dark days getting you down? Here's a chance to get away from it all and recharge your batteries

**T**HERE'S no doubt that January and February are two of the darkest, dreariest months of the year, so we've decided to cheer you up. NE Magazine has teamed up with Matfen Hall – the North-East's Large Hotel of the Year and the only spa in the world to offer Versace body treatments – to offer a very special winter warmer package for readers and the opportunity for one lucky reader to win 24 hours of warmth, luxury and pampering for two.

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include use of the 16 metre indoor swimming pool, and the Fire and Ice Experience, which incorporates crystal steam room, salt grotto herbal sauna, tropical shower and ice fountain.

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To make a reservation and for further information about Matfen Hall please phone (01661) 886500 or visit their website on [www.matfenhall.com](http://www.matfenhall.com).

**HOW TO ENTER**

To stand a chance of winning the luxury break, just tell us which Italian body treatments are exclusive to Matfen Hall. Answers to Matfen Hall Competition, Features, The Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF. Usual newspaper competition rules apply. The closing date is February 1.





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is produced by **The Northern Echo**/ Newsquest Ltd., a Gannett Company, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF (01325) 381313

**ADVERTISING** Gail Hunter (01325) 505 239 [gailhunter@nne.co.uk](mailto:gailhunter@nne.co.uk)  
**EDITORIAL** Jenny Needham (01325) 505082 [jenny.needham@nne.co.uk](mailto:jenny.needham@nne.co.uk)



# Snapping back

Photographer Keith Moss refuses to let bad luck with his health get him down, he tells **CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE**

**P**HOTOGRAPHER Keith Moss has every reason to be miserable. Eighteen years ago, while working as a manager for a butchery firm, he suffered severe spinal injuries in an accident at work. Then, ten years ago, he developed the condition ankylosing spondylitis, which was so painful he needed morphine.

Yet despite such serious health worries, the 46-year-old has remained true to his innate positive thinking, and it is with this mindset that he and his wife Pat, 42, have started afresh in the North-East, with the launch of their fine art gallery, in Brotton, near Saltburn-by-the-Sea.

Yet the man who has photographed Prince Andrew and had his work displayed in Vogue magazine has had no formal training in photography.

"As a child my father Gordon worked as an engineer but he was an amateur photographer in his spare time," recalls Keith, now a recognised Demontfort fine artist. "Like a lot of people in those days he used the bathroom as a dark room, with the bath as a wash tank. He photographed people, objects and landscapes.

"When I was 13 my dad got a job in Nigeria for a year. I went out to join my parents for about 12 weeks and they took me into the African Bush. I had my dad's camera and took loads of photographs of natives cooking round a camp fire and kids bathing in the river. Looking back, it was a great opportunity and those photographs were pretty good."

Keith's photography went on hold until after the 1988 accident, in which he crushed the base of his spine in a unit at work in Cambridgeshire.

"It left me very, very ill," he explains. "I couldn't walk and I struggled for a long time. Then I lost my job because I was no longer fit enough to manage a busy butchery department. It was a bad time for the two of us as losing my job was horrendous news for us financially.

"I was so fed up and bored that I asked my dad if I could borrow his camera. When he asked why, I told him I was going to be a photographer. He didn't exactly laugh, but I could tell he was wondering what I was talking about. But he just told me to get on with it and it would do me good."

**W**ITHIN six months of launching his photographic career in 1990, Keith had had a feature in Vogue magazine, and had worked for Mars, the confectionery company.

"I was very confident. I just knocked on doors and showed people a photograph. It could have been of anything, often a flower, and they just believed I was good and took me on," laughs Keith.

"I'm very spiritual. I visualise what I want and it works out. Businesses just gave me work photographing objects and it took off from there.

Keith and Pat had left St Ives and moved to Slaithwaite, near Oldham, after the accident. By 1994 their new life was going well – then another disaster struck. Keith was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis, a progressive inflammatory condition which affects the vertebrae of the spine.

"It was – and is – nasty," says Keith. "It affects your whole spine. I'd always been left with pain after my accident and I'd put a lot of my aches down to that, but with this condition you become

very stiff. It's very rare but there's no cure, just ways of controlling the pain with physiotherapy and drugs.

"For quite a few years, I just switched myself off. They were quite dark years for me. I was virtually housebound. But I think when you get to that point in your life you go down one of two roads. You either go for the spiritual side of life or you become depressed. I was fortunate – I went for the spiritual. When you're stripped of everything, you have nothing left but your own spirituality."

Keith and Pat had a two-berth caravan at Filey, which they used as a bolthole. It was while exploring the North-East that they fell in love with the Saltburn area.

"We started looking in estate agents' windows and we saw this property in Brotton High Street," recalls Keith. "Our bank manager urged us to put an offer in and we did. Everyone thought we were mad. I'm a real fighter. If I get something in my head, nothing on earth will stop me.

"It was obviously a time in our lives when we were ready for a move and most of my landscape work is coast or water-based.

"We opened our gallery in May and it really has been the best year of our lives. The local people have been great and clients have called in from as far afield as Bristol. Even American visitors have taken some of my work home."

**M**OVING to the North-East has also had an amazing effect on Keith's health. "When we lived near Saddleworth Moor, it wasn't a pleasant environment and it was very damp," he says. "Although it is cold here, it's not wet and my health has drastically improved. I believe in fate. I'm obviously where I was meant to be."

Keith now specialises in contemporary portraits and weddings, as well as his old favourites – the black and white seascapes. His gallery has been refurbished to include a lounge where clients can look through the 150 shots he produces from one half-day session.

"When we were up here for a weekend before we moved, we met a former spy, who was 92," grins Keith. "He told us this area was the healthiest place in the country, and I'm beginning to think he was probably right. I feel so much happier and healthier for moving here!"

● **Keith Moss Gallery, 65 High Street, Brotton.** A half-day sitting costs £125 and prints start from £10. The gallery opens from 10am until 8pm on Thursdays and from 10am until 5pm from Friday to Sunday. Telephone (01287) 679655 or visit [www.keithmossgallery.co.uk](http://www.keithmossgallery.co.uk) for further information.

*For quite a few years, I just switched myself off. They were quite dark years for me. I was virtually housebound*



Keith Moss: lives in the 'healthiest place in the country'

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# Time to dump the junk for juices

New Year is a good time to junk all those bad eating habits and embark on a healthy, balanced diet. A new book gives some tips on how to get the juices flowing

**I**t is becoming accepted that in order to combat the rising number of people suffering from degenerative conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and cancer, it is necessary to reduce refined carbohydrates and fatty 'junk' foods from our diet.

In the past, low carb diet plans have led to many dieters overreacting by reducing or even cutting out fruit and vegetables – from their diets, even though they contain many essential nutrients. A new book, *Low-Carb Juices and Smoothies*, aims to put that right with some fantastic recipes for fruit and veg with the lowest density of carbohydrates.

Why low carb? Even though carbohydrates are a vital part of our diet since they are our primary source of energy, many people are eating far too many of the wrong sort of carbohydrates. This is contributing to the worldwide obesity problem and to the growing numbers of people suffering from serious illness related to this.

What are the bad carbs? Essentially, there are three main types of carbohydrates: Simple sugars or monosaccharides: glucose (blood sugar) and fructose (fruit sugar). Double sugars or disaccharides: lactose (milk sugar). Complex carbohydrates or polysaccharides: starches and cellulose (potatoes, rice, grains and dietary fibre).

The bad carbs are the refined carbohydrates such as white flour and sugar that have been stripped of the nutrients which the body requires to metabolise them. Once the refining process has removed magnesium, zinc, chromium and B vitamins from white flour and sugar, they become not only nutritionally redundant but actually deplete the body of the vital minerals and vitamins that are needed to perform other important bodily functions.

So is it enough just to stop taking white sugar in your coffee? Unfortunately not. Refined carbohydrates lurk in virtually all junk food along with unhealthy hydrogenated fats, high levels of salt and a host of additives. These nutritionally empty foods make up 75 per cent of many people's diets and have a

**6 SIX GOOD REASONS TO JUICE**

- 1 Easy assimilation of vital nutrients
- 2 More nutritious than commercially prepared heat-treated juices
- 3 Detoxifying and cleansing
- 4 Quick meal replacements
- 5 Anti-ageing
- 6 Super-body booster properties to aid recovery from illness.

detrimental impact on your overall health. They hit the bloodstream very quickly and raise blood sugar (and, as a result, insulin levels). The blood sugar then drops rapidly, causing the body to crave another carb hit. So, if you have ever wondered how you can go back to the biscuit tin again and again and never feel sated, this is why.

**Do you have these symptoms?**  
 Fatigue mood swings, brain fog and inability to concentrate, carbohydrate cravings, bloating, constant hunger, continual yo-yo dieting. If so, then there is a good chance you could be a carbohydrate junkie. It's time to re-evaluate your diet, chuck out some bad habits and embrace a few healthy low-carb lifestyle guidelines...

**Cut out these foods...**  
 ...white bread and bread products, white rice, refined sugar, salt, fizzy drinks, bottled cordials and juice drinks, sweets, chocolate, margarine, sweet biscuits and cakes, canned fruit and vegetables (unless they are canned





in water), processed meat products, sugar-loaded cereals, sweetened fruit yogurts, ice cream (unless you buy a low carb brand), white pasta, prepacked convenience foods, sauces and gravy mixed.

**What can I eat?**

- High-fibre fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables can be added to salads, stir-fried or steamed as an accompaniment. It is important to include a healthy range in your diet every day, raw if possible.
- Healthy fats, Cold-pressed unrefined oils such as olive, sunflower, safflower, corn, flaxseed and sesame; plenty of oily fish; and nuts and seeds rich in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids will keep your body healthy and act as a secondary source of energy.
- High quality protein. Fish and shellfish and especially omega-3 rich oily fish such as sardines, mackerel, tuna and salmon are an excellent source of protein. Poultry and game is a particularly lean and healthy option. Try organic or free-range chicken, turkey, wild duck, pheasant, quail, rabbit, venison and wild boar. Meat should be organic if possible. Barbecue some beef, lamb or pork, or jazz up a salad with a little organic bacon and ham. Eggs can be boiled or scrambled and should be organic if possible. Cheese should be eaten in moderation, but the occasional 100g (3½oz) portion of organic cheese is totally acceptable. Soya products are high in healthy protein. If you are vegetarian or just fancy a change, tofu and soya products are good, low-fat choices. Whey protein powder is a great source of high biological value protein.

**Why juice?**

An easy way to hit your five-a-day target of fruit and vegetables is to include low-carb juices and smoothies in your diet. The most important benefit of juicing is the range and quantity of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and enzymes that are present in fruits and vegetables.

Phytonutrients are compounds in fruits and vegetables that are at the cutting edge of medical research as some believe they hold the key to preventing many degenerative diseases.

**PINEAPPLE, LETTUCE & CELERY JUICE**

- 125 g (4oz) pineapple, peeled and cored
- 125 g (4oz) lettuce
- 125 g (4oz) celery, trimmed
- ice cubes, to serve
- celery stalk, to garnish
- Makes 200 ml (7fl oz)



**Chop the pineapple roughly. Separate the lettuce into leaves. Cut the celery into lengths. Juice all the ingredients and serve in a tall glass over ice. This juice is both cleansing and detoxifying: it is also calming as lettuce is one of nature's natural tranquillisers.**

They detoxify the body, lower blood cholesterol levels and combat free radicals - the reactive molecules that attack cells and cause premature ageing.

Cooking vegetables destroys many of these essential enzymes. Because these enzymes are responsible for maintaining a healthy metabolism, digesting and absorbing food and converting it into body tissue and producing energy, it is better to consume most of these fruits and vegetables raw.

Juicing removes the indigestible fibre, releasing the nutrients to the body more quickly and in larger quantities. There are also important nutrients in the pith and pips of many fruits and vegetables that juicing makes available.

Fruits and vegetables also provide another necessary substance to the human body - water. As many of the beverages of choice for most people - coffee, tea, alcohol and fizzy soft drinks - tend to dehydrate the body, juices are a great choice.

**Low-Carb Juices and Smoothies (Hamlyn, £8.99)**

# Declaring war on the world's major killers

**A** NEW age of vaccines could be approaching, according to experts who say jabs to tackle major killers such as malaria, TB and HIV may be available in just a few years.

Prototypes of all these vaccines are already being tested in human trials.

Currently, no vaccine exists for the Aids virus HIV or malaria, and the jab against tuberculosis is not highly effective.

A team led by Professor Adrian Hill, from the Centre for Clinical Vaccinology and Tropical Medicines at Oxford University, is carrying out trials of a new malaria vaccine in Kenya. Tests of a new TB jab are also being conducted in Gambia and South Africa. HIV vaccines are more of a challenge and may take until 2015 to develop, says Prof Hill.

One problem is that there are literally hundreds of different genetic types of HIV. "I'm not sure there will be only one vaccine that will work. There may have to be different ones for different genetic types of HIV," says Prof Hill.

The first HIV vaccines would probably slow down the infection rather than eradicating it completely.

The new vaccines are being designed to be more effective at getting inside cells carrying disease.

Malaria affects more than 300 million people each year and kills more than one million, mostly in the developing world. In 2003 there were 1.75 million

deaths worldwide from tuberculosis, while a total of 40 million people are living with HIV.

Prof Hill says initial results suggested that the new vaccines were very effective. He adds that it might be possible to extend the technology to combat other infections such as avian flu and hepatitis B.

## 3

### WAYS TO...

help keep eyes healthy

- 1 Avoid eye strain by always making sure your child has good light for doing homework and reading.
- 2 Make sure your child eats plenty of fruit and vegetables, particularly grapes, oranges, kiwi fruit, broccoli, peas, sweetcorn and spinach.
- 3 Ensure regular breaks from close work and computers to avoid tired, red and sore eyes.

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## Reducing the risks of cot death

**R**ESearch by the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths reveals that some new parents report they were not made aware of how to reduce the risks of cot death.

Nearly a third of those taking part in an FSID poll said that cutting the risk of cot death – which claims the lives of over 300 babies a year in the UK – was either not discussed by their midwife or health visitor, or they had no recollection of it being discussed.

Less than half of parents who recalled a discussion said it took place during pregnancy, a crucial time for understanding the importance of cutting smoking, buying safe bedding and sleeping baby on the back from day one.

The FSID has created a colourful new sticker to be sent to maternity units and Sure Start programme centres across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is designed to stick on parent-held health notes and hospital cots, to complement the work of health professionals and remind them to discuss this essential advice.

“Although most midwives and health visitors are doing a great job, we need to try to ensure that everybody gets the right advice at the right time,” says FSID director, Joyce Epstein.

● To contact the FSID helpline, call 0870 787 0554.

HEALTH ISSUES: Every Friday in The Northern Echo

# 3

## WAYS TO...

help baby sleep soundly



**1** Take a blanket or soft toy to bed for a night so it smells of you, then put it back in with your little one. If he or she wakes, it should help give comfort and induce sleep.

**2** Make sure baby's bedroom is not too hot or cold – ideally 18 to 20 degrees celsius.

**3** Have a relaxing bedtime routine, with a bath and a story or lullaby. Enjoy a cuddle, then lay baby down in a darkened room.

# Putting the joy back into childbirth

CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE meets a woman who believes we should harness the body's natural powers to achieve a pain free labour

**K**ERRY Flear has learnt first hand the benefits of hypnotherapy. Five years ago, a car crash left the 35-year-old with both physical and psychological problems. As well as painful back, leg and chest injuries, Kerry also developed frightening panic and anxiety attacks.

The artist, who has also taught English to asylum seekers, was at her lowest ebb when, quite by chance, she stumbled across self-hypnosis. After learning the technique and using it for 20 minutes every day for several weeks, Kerry was amazed to find her pains and panic attacks vanished.

She was so impressed with the results that she embarked upon a clinical hypnotherapy and psychotherapy course with Lifka Therapies. She also learnt neuro-linguistic programming.

Now Kerry is about to use the techniques that cured her on expectant mums as HypnoBirthing arrives in the North-East for the first time. Popular in America and Australia, and tried and tested in London, HypnoBirthing aims to give women the opportunity to give birth without drugs.

During a 15-hour course, over four sessions, Kerry will teach pregnant women and their birthing companions self-hypnosis, meditation and breathing techniques to ensure

women have happy memories of giving birth. With a 16-year-old daughter – Georgina – of her own, Kerry is only too aware of how frightening giving birth can be.

“I didn't want any pain relief when I had Georgina,” remembers Kerry, “but there was an attitude among the midwives back then. They seemed to want all pregnant women to have gas and air and go up through the pain relief until they had an epidural. They pointed out I wouldn't get any medals for suffering.

“But what they didn't understand was that I didn't want to feel out of control. I wanted the experience to be as wonderful as possible, not hazy and confusing because of the drugs I had taken.

“As it happened, I got through it by concentrating on what my body was doing. I went with the flow, probably inadvertently using some of the techniques I'm now teaching people, and I didn't have pain relief.

“Women need to feel in control. It's their birth, their baby, and when it's their first time, they just don't know what to expect.”

HypnoBirthing was devised by Marie Mongan about 20 years ago, based on principles set down by 1930s English obstetrician Dr Grantly Dick-Read, founder of the National Childbirth Trust. Dr Dick-Read believed that tension led to pain, so if women giving birth were tense, they would feel pain all the more.



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**Kerry Flear:** teaches pregnant women self-hypnosis, meditation and breathing techniques to help minimise the pain of childbirth

Kerry will run her courses from her practice at the Healing Hands Clinic in Saltburn. "Some people expect all sorts of tricks, but I don't make anyone eat onions or walk round like a chicken," says Kerry. "I want to demystify the whole concept of hypnotherapy."

"I teach the women and their birthing companions to focus within. They learn to access their body's natural endorphins, and these will replace the stress hormones that cause tension and pain. These endorphins can be up to 200 times more effective than morphine."

"We also use creative visualisation. One example is visualising the cervix as a flower or blossom which is closed. Then the sun comes out, and the petals begin to open, and so does the cervix. The birthing companion can help with prompts. Using this technique can considerably speed up the birth."

"Even the way pregnant women are told to push the baby out can make them tense as they stop breathing, tense all their muscles and put all their energy into the push. We teach them a breathing technique that instantly relaxes the body and will ensure the baby is born more easily."

"We also teach women and their birthing companions a light touch massage, which en-

courages the body to release relaxants similar to the ones we release when we have sex or an orgasm."

One of the advantages of HypnoBirthing is the calm atmosphere into which the baby is born.

"If your body is releasing the stress hormone, the baby will get that, and will feel stressed," explains Kerry. "As your body reacts to the fear, the blood will rush to the extremities – away from the uterus. The baby then gets less oxygen and becomes distressed."

"However, if your body is releasing the feel-good endorphins, the baby will get these and will be perfectly happy, resulting, hopefully, in a normal, natural delivery."

The course also teaches pregnant women how to discuss ideas with their midwives.

"We want to take away the negative and replace it with a positive," continues Kerry. "Our mums ask that no one uses negative language in the birthing environment, and the environment will remain calm. They also ask for no medical intervention unless there are special circumstances."

"We don't use negative words such as contraction or pain. We call contractions 'a surge' or 'a wave'. Our bodies are meant to conceive and give birth naturally. It should be a wonderful experience, not one that terrifies us. Words such as 'labour' and 'contraction' and 'pain' are bound to make us feel tense."

"I am planning to get together with local midwives in the hope they will cooperate with the technique."

Kerry and her partner, artist Chris O'Neill, are hoping to make a film about HypnoBirthing to spread the message to more and more women.

"I can see HypnoBirthing becoming predominant within the next few years because people are becoming much more health conscious now, and they're more reluctant to have medical intervention or drugs when they're giving birth," adds Kerry.

● **HypnoBirthing costs £500 for a private course, and £300 for a group course. For more details contact Kerry on (01287) 280216 or (01287) 624121.**

**“Our bodies are meant to conceive and give birth naturally. It should be a wonderful experience, not one that terrifies us. Words such as ‘labour’ and ‘contraction’ and ‘pain’ are bound to make us feel tense**

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# Hospital bug under the spotlight

**According to a recently published survey by The Health Protection Agency and The Healthcare Commission the NHS is not doing enough to stop patients contracting a potentially fatal infection.**

The virulent bug *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) is a micro-organism that can cause diarrhoea and can sometimes lead to serious illness and occasionally death, with people over the age of 65 being particularly susceptible.



Peter Henry, a specialist clinical negligence solicitor at Teesside based Archers Law says, "The survey indicates that there are real concerns with the increase in *C. difficile* infections. In the event of an outbreak, over a third of the trusts surveyed do not follow relevant guidance aimed at protecting patients from *C. difficile*."

Questionnaires were sent to directors of infection prevention and control. Responses were received from 118 of the 173 NHS trusts (68%) in England and published in the interim report to highlight the important issues as winter approached when the prevalence of *C. difficile* tends to be the highest. A full report is set to be published in the spring.

Peter Henry says, "The majority of respondents from the trusts thought that the prescribing of antibiotics and the lack of facilities for isolation represent the greatest challenges to controlling infections. However, ironically the findings of the survey found that 40% of the trusts do not routinely isolate cases of infection, only 11% of the trusts have a ward that can be used for cases of *C. difficile* infection and 38% did not have restrictions on the use of antibiotics."

"We know that many NHS trusts are working hard to improve their infection control but the results from this survey show a clear contradiction between what some of the trusts know they should be doing and what is actually being done, meaning that patient health is being put in danger."

## So would infection amount to clinical negligence?

In a court decision as long ago as 1957 a Judge decided that provided the medical professional has acted in accordance with the practice accepted as proper by a responsible body of medical people, skilled in that particular art, they have not been negligent. Put simply, if a reasonable doctor or nurse would have done the same thing, there is no negligence.

To prove negligence you need another doctor, of the same speciality and at about the same level of seniority to go to Court and explain why no reasonable body of doctors would have treated the person in the way they were treated.

"Clinical Negligence can be difficult to prove in infection cases, as the evidence is not easy to collate," explains Peter Henry of Archers Law. "In many cases neither we nor the hospital may be able to determine the source of infection and whether it was acquired in the hospital."

"It is also difficult to say once the source of infection is established, that alternative action could have altered the outcome. Provided basic steps have been taken to isolate patients, identify the organism and treat it appropriately other doctors may be unwilling to state that the outcome could have been different."

"However, with correct legal guidance these cases can be pursued and we would encourage anyone who feels they have suffered genuine clinical negligence to contact us."

## What is *Clostridium difficile*?

*C. difficile* is an anaerobic bacterium that can cause an infection in the gut. The bacterium produces toxins, which damage the gut, causing illnesses of varying severity. Although some people, including babies, may carry the bacteria without any symptoms, most develop diarrhoea, which in severe cases, leads to colitis and occasionally death.

## Who is at risk?

There are certain people who are particularly at risk of developing infection caused by *C. difficile*, such as older people, those who have recently undergone surgery, and people with serious underlying disease, all in association with the recent use of antibiotics.

## How is it spread?

Under certain conditions, the *C. difficile* bacterium produces spores. The environment of the hospital may become contaminated with spores from *C. difficile* from patients who are already infected. This places other patients at risk.

(source: Health Protection Agency and Healthcare Commission, Management, prevention and surveillance of *Clostridium difficile*, Dec 2005)

## Time for redress?

The Chief Medical Officer of the National Health Service (NHS) produced a consultation document that sets out proposals for a new scheme to provide decisions on the validity of clinical negligence compensation claims.

When the "Redress Scheme" - as it has been named - is introduced it will mean that any new claims for clinical negligence that have a potential value of less than £20,000 will be handled outside of the legal system and within the NHS itself instead. If those who are adjudicating decide that compensation for clinical negligence should be paid, the amount that is awarded will be set within the limits of the scheme.



Clinical negligence claims that look likely to exceed the £20,000 level from the outset will continue to be issued through legal proceedings.

Andrew Kelly, specialist clinical negligence solicitor at Teesside based Archers Law says, "The NHS has been looking at ways to

improve the current system for handling and responding to clinical negligence claims made against them and although there is widespread support for any improvements that can be made to the system there is equally widespread concern that this new bill may not be the answer."

"As a legal firm that represents people who have been affected by medical errors we are obviously concerned about any implications that the new scheme may have on access to justice. If done well the NHS Redress Scheme could provide a speedier and less costly access to full explanations, remedial treatment and compensation, as well as actions to reduce the errors being repeated."

"But our main concern is that because the NHS would investigate itself internally it is a scheme therefore lacking in independence and as we see it, may lack the ability to deliver fair outcomes."

In the original consultation it is suggested that the scheme will only apply to claims arising from the hospital sector of the NHS. It is recommended, however, that the scheme will eventually be extended to cover situations arising out of consultation with General Practitioners. This scheme will not apply to care or treatment that goes wrong in the private medical sector.



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# Addicted!

## Too much of a good thing

It's the time of year a lot of us start a new exercise regime, but for some people, exercise can become compulsive to a degree which is as physically, psychologically and emotionally destructive as taking drugs. GABRIELLE FAGAN looks at exercise addiction

**C**OUCH potatoes might find it hard to believe but pounding on that gym treadmill and exercising in pursuit of health and fitness can become addictive.

TV's *Hollyoaks* star, Terri Dwyer, for example, who also won the Channel 4 reality show *The Games*, recently admitted that three years ago her exercise regime had been compulsive. The 31-year-old was struggling to cope with family illness and sought relief from the stress by visiting the gym twice a day six days a week.

"Going to the gym increases your serotonin levels, a chemical that makes you feel better," she says. "I became addicted to it. It got to the point where my family sat me down and said 'stop'."

David Nott, addictions manager at the Priory Hospital, is just one expert who acknowledges this relatively new addiction. "This isn't yet a common addiction but it is becoming increasingly recognised," he says. "There's cause for concern if people find their exercise regime disrupts their normal life – perhaps they spend more time at the gym than with their family.

"People who have an addiction will make excuses to their friends and family for their excessive exercising. At this time of the year people may justify it by saying that they've put on weight over Christmas, or they've resolved to get fitter."

He points out that some women with alcohol problems may replace those with an addiction to exercise.

Fitness and personal trainer Kristoph Thompson ([www.kristoph.co.uk](http://www.kristoph.co.uk)) says it's the hidden negative in the positive growth of gyms and attention to fitness.

"Exercise is a good thing, but that doesn't mean that lots of exercise is a very good thing. I tell clients that suddenly revving up your physical activity or overdoing it even when you're already fit can put your body under massive stress and increase the risk of serious injury. A balanced programme with time for rest and recuperation is vital."

### WHAT CAUSES EXERCISE ADDICTION?

When we exercise, our brains release feel-good hormones called endorphins, along with serotonin and adrenaline, which are responsible for stabilising mood and dealing with depression and anxiety.

Levels of endorphins, serotonin and adrenaline will stay elevated after exercise so the feel-good feeling remains long after you have finished your workout.

### ARE YOU AN EXERCISE JUNKIE?

**If you answer yes to more than three or four questions then it may be worth getting further information about exercise addiction.**

Is your need to exercise increasing?

**Do you spend time planning/manipulating to increase exercise opportunities?**

Do you fantasise about exercising when involved in other activities?

**Having exercised, do you feel relief/euphoria in anticipation of the next occasion?**

Do you experience depression/anxiety/anger when prevented from exercising?

**Can exercise take precedence over social life/family/relationships/work/non exercise-associated leisure activities?**

Has your need to prioritise exercise caused arguments?

**Have you ever been dishonest/surreptitious about time spent exercising?**

When you encounter a problem is your first impulse to exercise?

**Is exercise becoming your prime means of coping with stress and tension?**

Do you engage in inner dialogues justifying/rationalising your need to exercise?

The amount of these naturally occurring substances released by the body relates to the intensity of the exercise. It is possible to become addicted to the effects of exercise, constantly trying to get your body to release more of these hormones.

### HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE ADDICTED TO EXERCISE?

If you feel compelled to exercise seven days a week for two hours or more, you might consider yourself addicted.

More noticeable are the effects if you are not being able to exercise – feelings of guilt or laziness if the unthinkable happens and you can't get to the gym. You might find yourself moving heaven and earth to be able to exercise, scheduling your life around classes at the gym, ignoring aches and pains, or booking only at hotels with gyms so you can keep exercising on holiday.



Keeping fit is great for body and mind, but excessive exercise can be bad for you

### HOW CAN YOU KEEP A HEALTHY EXERCISE REGIME?

Exercise is a good thing and it's important not to lose sight of this, but a healthy exercise regime should incorporate rest and recovery. You shouldn't have to spend more than 90 minutes three or four times a week working out.

Any decent gym will allocate a fitness instructor to devise a programme that's safe and appropriate for your fitness level and goals.

Make the most of your time outside the gym – recovering between sessions is as important as the sessions themselves. Ensure you get plenty of sleep and eat the right kind of foods.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO DEAL WITH AN EXERCISE ADDICTION?

If you are exercising frantically, it is likely that you are overtraining.

Overtraining means that you do not allow

your body enough time to recuperate in between sessions and can raise blood pressure and heart rate, reduce your immune system, as well as causing feelings of fatigue and lethargy.

Since overtraining essentially does more harm than good, the best solution is to reduce the amount of exercise you are doing.

Try to refrain from exercise for one week, and then limit yourself to three hour-long sessions a week for the following three weeks.

After this period, return to exercise as normal, monitoring the amount you are doing, but remember that if you do miss a session or can only do one class it's not the end of the world.

If you feel you cannot deal with your problem alone, you may need help from a trained psychotherapist or counsellor. Chronic exercise addiction can be a severely debilitating condition meriting clinical intervention, even hospitalisation.

Visit [www.addictions.co.uk](http://www.addictions.co.uk).





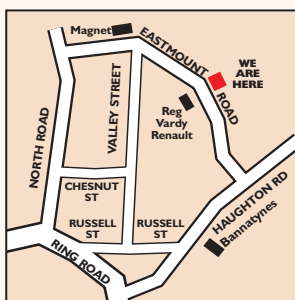
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Carole Caplin tells CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE of her painful journey



Prime Minister Tony Blair and wife Cherie. Carole was prominent in their lives in the 1990s, giving the couple advice on image and lifestyle

One day when I was 19, I woke up and I couldn't move...

**T**HE minute I met Carole Caplin I could see why people befriend her, trust her and confide in her. I'd done a big run the day before and was hobbling in high-heeled suede boots for our interview in Harrogate. Carole had already heard about my bout of exercise and she leant towards me conspiratorially and whispered: "Are you completely knackered?"

I felt as though I had a new best friend. Although she's best known for her closeness to her other best friends, Tony and Cherie Blair, Carole Caplin has carved out a niche for herself in the world of health and fitness and alternative medicine.

Today she looks the part - she's glowing with good health, has clear skin, perfect white teeth and a slim figure more befitting of a woman of 28 than the 43-year-old she is. Her London-based lifestyle company Lifesmart encapsulates the lessons she has learnt over the last 20 years during a long and often painful

journey to good physical and emotional health.

"I was a typical teenage rebel," says the former model, who was also a dancer with Shock and appeared on Top of The Pops. "I had had an amazing time, travelling all over the world modelling in what, I suppose, was my gap period. But I ate nothing but rubbish. I ate 50 chocolate biscuits in one go, and lots of Big Macs and chips.

"Then, one morning when I was 19, I woke up and I couldn't move. My mum got me to the Queen's osteopath who decided I had severe scoliosis, brought on by a growth spurt. One of my legs was almost two inches shorter than the other and I had a twisted pelvis."

Caplin's mother Sylvia, now 71, had pioneered public exercise in Britain and taught her regime Shape Up and Stretch to the likes of Felicity Kendal. She taught her daughter that exercise was about a way of life and whenever a new client appeared, Sylvia





ney from ill health to the shining example of vitality she is today



- Carole was a special guest of the Consumers for Health Choice at the Natural Trade Show in Harrogate, where the latest natural products and complementary techniques were on display.
- Her book Lifesmart, a whole body approach to optimum health and well-being, is published by Orion, £16.99.
- For further information, visit [www.lifesmart.co.uk](http://www.lifesmart.co.uk) and [www.healthchoice.org.uk](http://www.healthchoice.org.uk)



Picture of health: Carole Caplin in Harrogate, centre, and left, with Cherie Blair

*“I’m a complete chocolate tart. I loved stuffing chocolate down my gullet, but I discovered chocolate was responsible for my migraines*

much organic food as possible. But it wasn’t an easy process. “I’m a complete chocolate tart,” she laughs. “I loved stuffing chocolate down my gullet, but I discovered chocolate was responsible for my migraines. No vegetables entered my home. I thought they were for nerds. And I knew if a restaurant was good if my Coca Cola wasn’t too fizzy or sweet.”

By her 30s, Carole had turned her health around, and she says the last 13 years have been her healthiest.

“I don’t drink much alcohol as I don’t like it much, but every now and again I have a glass of Baileys,” she says. “I’m very prone to bloating and water retention so I must be careful. I’m much more energetic than I have ever been and don’t want to undo all my hard work.”

But even though she’s been close to the Prime Minister and his wife, Carole stresses she doesn’t live the celebrity life, and though she doesn’t want to discuss her private life or her clients, she hints at the lessons learnt from her past actions.

Carole is said to have met Cherie Blair in a gym in Islington in 1989, and the two became friends when Carole advised the Prime Minister’s wife on her health and lifestyle. She hit the headlines again during the “Cheriegate” controversy when Mrs Blair bought the Bristol flats, with help from Carole’s then boyfriend Peter Foster, a convicted fraudster.

Carole confides: “Now I am in my forties, I have a self-acceptance, which I didn’t have when I was younger. I’ve learnt my lessons hard and have walked into brick walls in the past, but now, when I’m upset and obsessing, I accept it and I come through it.”

“It’s about admitting I’m not perfect. I don’t go round worrying about getting old. I’m comfortable the way I am.”

But, I ask, isn’t her career far more interesting simply because she has such high-profile clients?

“Most of my business is commercial. I train businessmen and women,” she explains. “If some of my clients have gone on to be famous, you need to remember I knew them a good ten years before they were famous.”

Besides, being a lifestyle advisor to the rich and famous isn’t how Carole wants to be remembered.

“By the time I leave this planet my job shouldn’t exist as such,” she explains. “By then good health will be the norm. I’m not against having a good time. No one can trash a table of food like I can, but life is all about choices. We can choose to drink in moderation, not to smoke, to get plenty of sleep and fresh air, for example. I want to make sure people know what’s on offer, and then they can make their own choices and turn their lives around.”

examined their lifestyle, their previous injuries and their stress levels.

But even her mum’s classes didn’t ease Carole’s pain. She gave up dancing and went into sales and marketing, three and a half stones overweight, covered in acne, and suffering from candida, a yeast overgrowth condition, and a form of ME. At 22 she was delivered a harsh home truth.

“I was standing in my underwear before a lady osteopath, who used to adjust me once a month,” remembers Carole. “She took one look at me one day and told me I was a mess. She pointed out my cellulite and said I’d done nothing at all to help myself in the two years she had been treating me. She said she wouldn’t help me until I started to help myself.”

From then on, Carole devised a routine based on stretching and breathing to exercise the whole body. She gradually changed her whole diet, eventually giving up tea and coffee, coming off the Pill and eating as

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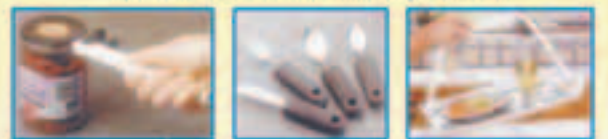
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# My running year

Fired up with determination at the start of a New Year, CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE decides to run her way to health and fitness

**W**ITH New Year's Resolutions in mind, I signed up for a Success Workshop at the beginning of last year. When asked to write down our goals for the year ahead, I wrote – run six miles regularly. Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time...

When performance coach Phil Olley urged the group at Ripley Castle, near Harrogate, to stretch ourselves, I doubled my six miles, then realised I was almost up to a half-marathon distance. I wrote down: "Take part in a half-marathon", ignoring the voice in my head saying: "In your dreams."

On New Year's Eve I revealed I was going to do the Great North Run. My friends looked at me in horror. Fuelled by wine and cocktails, back home I went on-line and registered my interest in every half-marathon and 10k run going.

## JANUARY 2005

IT was a brand new year, and my computer inbox was full of messages welcoming me to several half-marathons in most big cities. I narrowed down my runs to the Manchester 10k run in May, and the Great North Run in September, feeling confident about running the six miles in Manchester as I had done that distance a few years earlier. The thought of 13 miles was scary. The consolation was I might not even get a place.

Plagued by coughs, colds and earache, I vowed I'd start my training in February.

## FEBRUARY

USING one of the Success Workshop tools, the 28-day grid, I promised myself I would be able to run six miles by the end of February. The theory is that it takes 28 days to change a habit – you simply tick the box in the grid every day that you've stuck to your habit. If you miss a day, you go back to the beginning.

My new habit was to run for half an hour a day. I started out running a 1.2 mile circuit near our home, and returned with just enough breath to tick the habit box. But I built up and I managed to run five miles – not six – by the end of February.

In the meantime, I entered the ballot for the Great North Run. To my horror, I got a place. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

## MARCH

I STALLED at five miles during training. Anything over that and I was worn out. I frightened myself that 13 miles was almost three times the distance I could run and wondered how I could have been so foolish to have entered.

## APRIL

I WAS doing five miles three times a week when I went down with a cold. I could barely walk to the door, let alone run five miles on country roads. The cold developed into a chest infection. I felt like giving up on the Great North Run dream, but seeing it written on my list for 2005 made me determined to stick with it.

I visited Clare Midgley, who specialises in Bach Flower Remedies, in Newton Aycliffe and she gave me a concoction ofimpatiens for my impatience, rock water for setting myself high standards, willow for feeling resentful about being ill and vervain for being over-enthusiastic. It might have been psychological but I started to feel better. The Manchester run was looming.

## MAY

I'D trained hard and managed six miles in an hour. I was really excited about the Manchester 10k run. The evening before, we stayed at the Lowry Hotel in Manchester, where I sipped mineral water and herbal teas. Then, during the night, the shivers started, my whole body ached and my ears raged with pain.

The next morning, as the runners filled the streets of Manchester, I was on my way home, very miserable and ill.

## JUNE

I HAD hoped the Manchester Run would be a warm-up for the Great North Run. Now I felt as though I were being thrown in at the deep end. The thought of 13 miles scared me into regular training and throughout June I notched up 20 miles a week in three runs. My feet were covered in blisters.

Using another Success Workshop tip, I wrote out an index card about how I would feel when I'd done the Great North Run – ecstatic, elated and superfit – and I read it every day.

## JULY

I INCREASED my distance to ten miles but couldn't run the whole way. I started to run and walk. I now had blisters on top of my blisters – but there was an advantage to all this running. I could eat and drink whatever I wanted, and I didn't put on a single pound. Bliss.

When my muscles ached, I visited Sue Mellish, an aromatherapist in Richmond, who drained the lactic acid that builds up in muscles after strenuous exercise using lavender for

fatigue, camomile for my nervous system and geranium to balance me.

## AUGUST

THE run was just over a month away and I still hadn't cracked more than ten miles. On holiday in France I felt worn out just walking.

For a pick-me-up, I turned to acupuncture and Mandy Metcalfe unblocked my energy channels from her practice at Croft House Clinic, Northallerton, which seemed to work.

## SEPTEMBER

IT was the month of the Great North Run and I did 11 miles in two hours on a training run. The week before the run I ran 13 miles – and survived! I started to collect sponsors for Macmillan Cancer Relief.

I didn't sleep the night before the run. I was worried about getting to Newcastle on time, how I would cope with the heat and if I really could manage 13.1 miles. Bach's Rescue Remedy calmed my nerves.

Nothing had prepared me for the emotion of the Great North Run. I felt like crying at the line-up when I saw parents running in memory of their late young children, and women wearing shirts saying: "I'm doing this for you, Mum."

But as our walking turned into running long before the starting line, I got the buzz. The brilliant crowds cheered us on, householders sprinkled us with their garden hoses to cool us down and I just ran and ran and ran. Whenever I felt like walking, there was someone cheering and I carried on running.

As I crossed the finishing line, I burst into tears. There had been times when I had felt like giving up, but I was so glad I didn't. I checked my time on-line. I did it in two and a half hours, and came 25,708th! That night, I prescribed myself a few drops of Bach's Olive flower remedy and a large glass of red wine for complete exhaustion.

## OCTOBER

I COLLECTED more than £400 in sponsor money and gave myself a fortnight off running before pounding the streets once again.

## NOVEMBER

People keep asking me if the London Marathon is my next aim, but I quite fancy a trip to New York...





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**T**HE female orgasm is still shrouded in mystery, and completely baffling to most men. Surveys have shown that a man, eventually, will almost always climax during sex. Statistically, only two per cent do not.

The same is definitely not true for women. The surveys also show that around a third of women are unable, or unlikely, to reach an orgasm during sex. Sometimes it works for them, and sometimes it doesn't. It will happen with one partner, but not with another.

Women also take an average of 12 minutes to reach an orgasm, while the average time for men is two-and-a-half minutes.

Now a team led by Professor Tim Spector, director of the Twin Research Unit at St Thomas's Hospital, London, has published findings from a unique study of the genetics of the female orgasm. By comparing two groups of identical and non-identical twins, the scientists were able to show that the ability of a woman to climax during sex is largely genetic.

All 4,037 women, who spanned a wide age range from 19 to 83, were confidentially asked personal questions about their sex lives.

Comparisons showed that 34 per cent of the variation in sexual response during intercourse was genetic. In the case of masturbation, the figure rose to 45 per cent.

# 3

## WAYS TO...

help your child avoid colds

**1** Maximise your child's natural resistance with a balanced diet including fruit and vegetables, plus plenty of exercise and sleep.

**2** Turn down thermostats and keep up humidity at home. Open windows or doors for a short time so air circulates.

**3** Teach your child the importance of washing hands frequently, particularly when colds are going round.



### FACTBOX

- For details on the Great North Run, visit [www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org)
- Details of Phil Olley's Success Workshop can be found at [www.philolley.com](http://www.philolley.com)
- Clare Midgley of Balance Holistic Healthcare is on (01325) 308283.
- Bach Original Flower Remedies are available from pharmacies and health food stores.
- Aromatherapist Sue Mellish is on (01748) 850471.
- For acupuncture at Croft House Clinic, Northallerton, telephone (01609) 783600 or visit [www.acupuncture.org.uk](http://www.acupuncture.org.uk) for your nearest practitioner.

# 3

## WAYS TO...

help with teenage skin care

**1** Make sure they drink plenty of fluids and have a balanced diet, with fruit and vegetables. Encourage regular exercise.

**2** Teenagers should wash faces twice daily using a mild cleanser and warm water, and keep their hair clean too.

**3** Girls should avoid oil-based makeup and products. Boys who shave should use a sharp razor. Help keep their skin in tip-top shape with a good cleanser, toner, moisturiser and sunscreen.

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Our bodies need a bit of a boost in the early months of the year, after the stresses of the festive season and the ravages of the weather. We recommend some treatments which can help the body and the mind to repair themselves

**L**ATHERING on the daily moisturiser is part of most women's beauty regimes, however basic. But it can be a greasy affair, and whatever the pricetag, there's no guarantee it's going to delay the signs of ageing. How much better if we could replace the stuff that pumps up the skin from within, the hyaluronic gel, collagen and elastin that naturally deplete with age. A new treatment from Collagenics, a company which specialises in anti-ageing and non-surgical beauty treatments, claims to do exactly that. Restylane Vital stimulates the production of collagen and elastin, which the body loses as we age, to help reverse the skin ageing process. The new treatment can be used on the face, and areas such as the neck, décolletage and the back of hands, areas which are particularly prone to sun damage. Hyaluronic gel, which is naturally present in abundance in young skin, is deposited in the area being treated through a series of small injections. "It's a great product which really fills the gap for people aged between 35 and 75," says Collagenics nurse practitioner Alison Matthews. "Everyone ages differently but the hands, neck and décolletage often

## Putting the elastic back

get ignored and Restylane Vital is perfect for treating these areas. "Some women do have very dry, wrinkly hands, depending on what they do for a living, and others suffer from crepey skin on the chest and neck. This product adds volume back to the skin and the sort of fresh-faced plumpness that younger women take for granted." The Swedish product, made by Q-med, is manufactured to mimic our own hyaluronic acid. An initial course of two to three treatments is followed by maintenance treatments. "Unlike with Botox and other dermal fillers, you won't see the results straight away, because it gradually builds up, replacing volume – a sort of moisturising from within," says Alison. "Basically, it helps you turn back the clock." ● Other treatments offered by Collagenics, which has clinics across the North-East, are Botox, dermal fillers and skin peels. For more information or to book call Collagenics on (01325) 367 367 or check out their website: [www.collagenics.com](http://www.collagenics.com)

# A happy new year!

In the dark days of January, MARIE CARTER finds her spirits lifted – and her hearing improved – down on the farm

**U**P a winding dirt track just outside Ferryhill stands High Hill House Farm, a dairy farm which hides a secret. Side by side with the milking cows, the farm houses Broom Mill Day Spa, which boasts an array of relaxing and invigorating treatments. And I was about to experience two of the newest, and arguably the strangest, therapies on offer.

In the short, dark days of winter, increasing numbers of us suffer from seasonal mood swings and the spa offers a simple but remarkable treatment that's truly enlightening.

Described as a "new dawn", White Light Therapy is one of those treatments that has around for a while. Emerging now from behind the label of New Age quackery, the therapy is letting a little light into the gloomy lives of the thousands suffering from the often debilitating Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Research has shown that one person in 50 in the UK suffers badly from this often misunderstood condition, enduring sleep problems, lethargy, physical symptoms such as a lowered immune system, and loss of libido. One in eight of us also gets a milder form of the condition, the "winter blues" – that feeling of lowness and lack of energy that seems to descend like a veil along with the dark nights.

It doesn't help that most people now work in the artificial light and climate of a modern office and barely set foot outside during the daylight hours. Is it any wonder that most of us then want to scurry home to hibernate once we've emerged bleary eyed into the outside gloom?

So unless we're lucky enough to spend these months near the equator where SAD doesn't strike, White Light Therapy may well be the answer.

Says Jill Cheesmond, who runs Broom Mill with her sister Dawn Larn: "It's good for anyone to try this time of year. We have lots of customers who come in for a treatment on a Friday and it sets them up for the weekend. Some

people also use smaller white light boxes at home during the week, as they come to realise the benefits."

Suffering from occasional winter blues, I was eager to try out this revolutionary treatment. Jill recommended an initial ten minutes to try out the system, but once you get used to it, you can enjoy the invigorating light for up to 30 minutes at a time.

Cradling a cup of coffee, I make myself comfortable in a chair inside the compact White Light Re-energising Room as Jill drops a token into the machine to activate the lights. Soothing acoustic music drifts into the room and clients have the option of browsing through a selection of magazines or watching TV.

Three large white light panels frame the room while half a dozen red and orange lights keep me alert. A blend of aromatherapy oils infuses the air while an energy-giving infra-red light works its magic above my head.

Nothing happens at first but after a few minutes staring levelly at the bright white panels and glancing at Heat magazine, I suddenly feel very calm, as if I'm drifting in a boat along a river dangling my hand in the water... Too soon the bright lights click off and my ten minutes are up.

It was really just as well that I was feeling calm as I was about to have burning cylinders of wax put into my ears. Broom Mill is one of the few spas in the region to offer Hopi Ear Candling, a treatment that's becoming increasingly popular with the spa's dedicated band of clients.

This is a therapy handed down by the Ancient Greeks and the Native American Hopi Indians, from whom it gets its name. Five-inch long candles made of a mixture of beeswax, honey extracts and St John's Wort are inserted into each ear in turn while you're lying down. The candles are meant to have a warming effect on the ears and head, which soothes, relieves and relaxes.

"The treatment is good for treating sinus



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Every year, in the construction industry, workers are killed and many other injured as a result of head injuries. If you wear a safety helmet your chances of being seriously hurt are greatly reduced. Wearing one could save your life.

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- keep scaffolds free of loose materials
- tie suspended loads securely

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- Wear the helmet the right way round - it does not give proper protection when worn back to front
- Wear a chin strap if you have to bend forward or down, look up or work where it is windy
- Wear the helmet so that the brim is level when the head is upright

#### Don't

- Use your helmet as a handy basket - it is designed to fit on your head, not for mixing cement or carrying nails!
- Store them in heat or direct sunlight, such as in the rear window of a car
- Share your helmet with anyone else on site

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Some of the treatment rooms at Broom Mill





Jill Cheesmond performing Hopi ear candling on her sister Dawn Larn

problems or headaches, and people often come in before they fly as it stops their ears popping. It's also an excellent painless alternative to having your ears syringed," says Jill.

The main, less pleasant, effect of the treatment however is that it draws out wax from the ear canal, leaving either hard chunks or a fine yellowish powder in the candle – depending on how much your ears are bunged up.

"We have one client who suffers from migraines who comes in every six weeks, and although she never has any wax now, she says it eases her headaches," Jill says.

And while some people are still sceptical about such treatments, Jill is quick to add that with Hopi Ear Candling, "at least you've got proof in the wax".

Call me melodramatic, but I was still worried at the prospect of having burning candles put in to my ears. Jill, though, does a very good job of making you relax into the moment with a fantastically soothing head and ear massage.

Feeling like drifting off to sleep, particularly as I could only partially hear, I am suddenly drawn back into wakefulness by a low crackling and hissing sound.

Jill has huge faith in the treatment... and with good reason. Her father, who'd been pretty deaf in one ear for years, came in for a session and afterward said he could hear properly for the first time in years.

Ear candling can perhaps be described as a kind of colonic irrigation for the ears as it works on a similar kind of suction principle. And although there wasn't much residue in the candles after my session, my hearing did seem sharper.

After my unusual but lovely afternoon at the Broom Mill Spa, I step strangely energised out into the unseasonable sunshine feeling



*"The treatment is good for treating sinus problems or headaches, and people often come in before they fly as it stops their ears popping"*

brighter and more aware of the sounds of the countryside around me. In fact, I could happily spend my time here until the cows come home.

● For more information or to book a treatment, including spa packages, at Broom Mill, call 01740 654225 or email [info@broommilldayspa.co.uk](mailto:info@broommilldayspa.co.uk). The spa is located at High Hill House Farm, Dean Bank, Ferryhill, Co. Durham.

## LA STONE THERAPY

**WHAT: La Stone Therapy**  
**WHERE: Sue Mellish, Richmond**  
**(01748) 850471**

**N**OT to be confused with hot stone massage, La Stone Therapy is the mother of all treatments. Well, great grandmother actually, because the therapy is based on Native American rituals, in which heated and cooled stones are applied to the body to ease aching muscles.

To start, I lay on my back on a line of strategically-placed hot black basalt lava stones while Sue smudged both our auras to ensure there were no unwelcome visitors from the spirit world in the room. As the Native American music struck up gently in the background, part of me wondered what weird treatment I was in for!

I was pleasantly surprised. Not so much weird as wonderful, the warmed stones were delicious to lie on, like a comforting hot water bottle. As Sue placed other stones on my chakras, the energy points on my stomach, my forehead and my hands, I felt I was in good, safe hands and I relaxed.

Then, with hot stones in her hand, Sue began the massage, starting with the fronts of my legs, then arms, chest, neck and face. The stones are said to have the strength of more than ten massage strokes from the hand, yet the sensation was gentle but firm.

Occasionally, a hot stone was swapped for a cooler marble one, giving the circulation a good workout, and intense healing for aching muscles. Although I noticed the contrast in temperature to begin

with, the cold stone felt refreshing and energising and after a while, I didn't even notice the change.

I felt as though my whole body was being treated for the entire 90 minutes. I was lying on the stones, holding them, had them between my toes, and was being massaged with them. The 54 hot stones and 12 cold ones were everywhere, but with all their therapeutic properties, surely that could only be good?

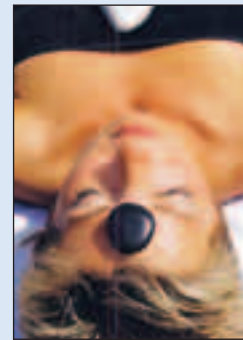
By the time I was asked to turn over and lie on my stomach – on a hot stone, of course – I was drifting off. I remained awake to enjoy the start of a lovely hot soothing massage on the backs of my legs and my back. Soon after I was asleep – and dreaming – a clear sign of how relaxed I had become.

Yet when the bell tinkled to mark the end of the treatment, I felt unusually alert and energised. Chores I had put off for months flashed through my mind and I felt confident I could tackle them with my newly-restored get-up-and-go.

Several days later, I still felt fantastic. My stiff neck had eased considerably and I felt so much more relaxed. This is definitely a nurturing treatment, but also a good one for when we need extra energy supplies to see us through.

La Stone Therapy, £45 for 90 minutes.

**Christine Fieldhouse**



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## The power of ancient practices

**I**NSTEAD of reaching for the medicine cabinet, New Age healers, resurrecting ancient practices, reach for emergency crystals, directing their energies towards different chakras. The world of crystals is beautiful and mysterious, but it can also be confusing. In **The Book of Crystal Healing** (Gaia, £12.99), Liz Simpson offers a wealth of information, inspiration and advice for the crystal-curious.

Also from Gaia, **The Healing Energies of Light** (£9.99) offers practical advice on bringing more light into our daily lives to promote physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

**Pilates: Creating the Body You Want** by Anna Selby and Alan Herdman (Gaia, £12.99) is a guide to the exercise developed about 75



years ago by Joseph Pilates. By calling on the mind to work with precision on every muscle of the body, advocates say he unlocked the key to a flatter stomach, longer limbs, a stronger back and the poise of a dancer. You don't need any equipment to start and the clear diagrams in the book will start you off.

[www.gaiabooks.co.uk](http://www.gaiabooks.co.uk)

## Evicting those unwanted guests

**N**O-ONE likes having to deal with headlice, but children, parents and schools are being urged to take joint action against these unwelcome little guests.

Community Hygiene Concern, a national charity supported by the Department of Health, has developed a special Bug Buster wet comb with bevelled teeth. Used on shampooed, conditioned hair, it can find and lift out even a single louse. There is also a comb for removing 'nits', the empty eggshells left stuck on hair shafts. The Bug Buster Kit removes lice systematically to break the life-cycle in four sessions, spaced over two weeks.

# Meet the diet doctors

Dr Wendy Denning and Vicki Edgson have been dubbed the Trinny and Susannah of nutrition, a label they're not completely comfortable with, but which is helping them get their message to the nation. They reveal a few of their secrets to HANNAH STEPHENSON



Helping the body to heal itself: Dr Wendy Denning, left, and Vicki Edgson





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**T**HEY are being hailed the Trinny and Susannah of nutrition, but Dr Wendy Denning and Vicki Edgson, better known as The Diet Doctors, are more inclined to raid your fridge than your wardrobe.

They can be seen dishing out advice to the nation in their six-part series on Five, *The Diet Doctors*, and in the accompanying book, *The Diet Doctors Inside And Out*.

When we meet at Dr Wendy's private practice in London, you can see why they were paired up for TV. Wendy would undoubtedly be the Trinny of the duo. Tall, skinny and blonde, in a leopard-skin print shirt and wearing the compulsory stethoscope of the GP, she is gregarious and outgoing, her hearty laugh filling the room. Vicki, the nutritionist, is quieter and more serene but no less determined to make us lead a healthier lifestyle.

"We move in quite similar circles and it's surprising we hadn't met before," says Wendy. "We also have the same beliefs at our practices and follow the same principles," adds Vicki.

The pair seem slightly uncomfortable with the Trinny and Susannah comparison. "We are frank with our people, but we are deeply respectful to each individual who comes across our path," says Wendy.

"We wouldn't be involved in the programme if humiliation was involved," adds Vicki. "This is a programme about motivating people to get off their bums and get moving, to clear out their fridges and cupboards and to re-learn how to eat properly. If you give your body what it needs, it will heal itself."

Each week in the show they take an overweight individual with a particular problem – heavy irregular periods, circulation problems, asthma, dermatitis, constipation, depression etc – then carry out a medical and nutritional analysis and advise them how to change their lives.

"Rather than just looking at overweight people and saying you need to lose weight, we are monitoring the effect on that person having walked around for ten, 15 or 20 years with excess weight and what it's doing to their system," says Vicki.

You can find out a lot about the state of your health just by examining your tongue, skin, eyes, nails and hair. "There are quite simple signs that you can readily identify to show you if you've been pushing it," says Wendy.

Their new book offers practical advice on how to make lifestyle changes which will make you feel better and healthier, along with tips on analysing your health, including self examination.

## ANALYSE YOUR HEALTH TONGUE

- You should look for three things: its shape/size, colour and coating. The normal tongue is salmon pink/light red with a thin, white, moist coating and is smooth with no cracks.

- A pale tongue points to a deficiency – lack of vitamins, minerals and/or protein and/or hormones and neurotransmitters. Typical symptoms include fatigue and lethargy, cold hands and feet, a tendency to feel the cold, iron deficiency, underactive thyroid, dizziness, pale complexion, lack of libido.

- A red tongue may indicate acute fever, thirst, constipation, bad temper, skin problems, excess alcohol or coffee, and headaches.

- A red tip may indicate stress, insomnia, a tendency to be upset or depressed, or you may have PMT.

- A purple tongue equates to poor circulation with corresponding symptoms including menstrual cramps, fibroids, pain in a specific area of the body such as backache, dull skin and cold arms and legs.

- If you have a swollen tongue, it may be a problem in the digestive system. If it is just swollen on the sides, it indicates a problem with the liver.

- Tongue coatings can also indicate various conditions. A thick white coating may be associated with a viral illness such as a cold, fatigue, lethargy and swollen ankles, while a white coating at the back of the tongue could indicate poor digestion.

- A brown coating is linked to constipation, smoking and coffee, while a yellow coating indicates irritation, anger and stress.

## SKIN

- Look out for colour, texture (dry or oily) and any inflammation. Pale skin indicates anaemia or underactive thyroid, while red skin is associated with either anger, fever or too many stimulants such as coffee and alcohol. You could be more prone to developing arthritic symptoms due to a generalised degree of inflammation in the body.

- If you have yellow skin you may be jaundiced, while grey skin indicates you've been working your body too hard, or you have a sluggish liver or an underlying cardiovascular disease.

- The two most common causes of dry skin are lack of water and essential fatty acids. Dry skin can also be linked with lack of vitamin A and B and is aggravated by drinking too much tea, coffee and alcohol.

- An oily skin can be related to hormonal balances and a diet high in sugar, saturated fat and protein.

## EYES

- If they are yellow or jaundiced, there may be a problem with the liver or gall bladder, with a build-up of bile. It may also be Gilbert's syndrome, which refers to a waste product which builds up in the liver. This happens more when the person affected is stressed or fasting.

- Dark circles under the eyes are often due to lack of sleep, but may also be down to a problem with the digestive system or liver, commonly caused by food sensitivities, digestive problems, parasites in the bowel and a sluggish liver.

- Bloodshot eyes could be due to eye strain, tiredness or too much alcohol, as well as lack of vitamins B2 and B6.

- Dry eyes are most common in women after the menopause, but may also occur due to deficiencies in Omega 3 and 6 essential fatty acids, a sluggish thyroid or a complication of a condition like rheumatoid arthritis.

## HAIR

- Thinning hair is generally determined by genes and hormones. Women's hair tends to thin with age, although it may thin prematurely from childbirth, a severe emotional shock, stress, a poor diet, lack of iron, thyroid disease and sudden weight loss.

- Dry hair can be linked with inadequate protein intake, essential

fatty acid deficiencies and the menopause, while greying hair, a common sign of ageing, may also be caused by a major shock or by chronic anaemia and thyroid problems.

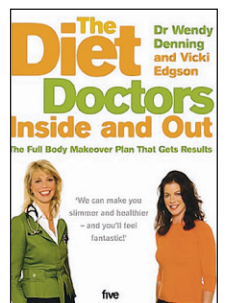
## NAILS

- Nutritional deficiencies often have visible effects on the nails. If they are discoloured, it may be down to diabetes, stress, prolonged illness, food intolerances or the prolonged use of nail varnishes and removers.

- Brittle nails may be caused by a lack of vitamin A, calcium and essential fatty acids, problems with thyroid, kidney or circulation.

- White spots are associated with zinc and/or calcium deficiencies, while horizontal ridges may be caused by injury, thyroid problems, severe stress and vitamin B deficiencies.

The Diet Doctors is on Five on Thursdays. The Diet Doctors Inside And Out: The Full Body Makeover That Gets Results, by Dr Wendy Denning and Vicki Edgson, is published by Vermilion, £12.99



**It's just what the doctor ordered...!**

**NE HEALTH MAGAZINE**

**Don't miss our next issue of NE Health on Wednesday, May 31.**

All you need to know about diet, exercise and a healthy lifestyle

In the next edition...  
 Eye health: what to watch out for  
 Step into summer: fitness for feet  
 The bikini diet: prepare your body for the beach and much more...

summer autumn spring winter





Northern Echo Life Coach  
**JULIETTE LEE** gives some tips for successful self-improvement in the coming year

# All change for 2006 –

**W**E heap so much pressure on ourselves in January with the New Year, New You thing. But what has really changed between December 31 and January 1? Just one day...

Taking things one step at a time is the key to change. "An apple a day, keeps the doctor away," goes the saying, emphasising taking life one day at a time. It doesn't say eat pounds of apples one month and it will see you right for the rest of the year.

Patience and persistence are qualities that are sorely missing in today's quick fix society. Most of the resolutions we make will be broken by Feb-

ruary, if not sooner. So how do you go about making changes that stick?

**Ask yourself what is it that you really want.**

**DISTINGUISH** between goals and measures. Defining what you want is important. Most of us want to be healthy and happy. Take weight, for example. If you are overweight, then it will affect your health so it may be time to lose weight. But the goal isn't losing weight, the goal is a healthier body and therefore feeling good about yourself. Losing weight is a measure, *not* the goal. So get

clear about what it is that you are really aiming for.

**Check your motivation. How much do you really want it and why?**

**THE** only person you can change in life is yourself, no-one else. If you want a healthier body because someone else is saying you need to, then your motivation for change is flawed. Changing for someone else may work short term but long term, the change cannot be sustained.

**Have a vision then set small, measurable goals**

**HAVING** a vision and setting goals is

# NE health

## Exercise Tips ▼

- 1 Obtain medical clearance to exercise
- 2 Stop exercising if you feel pain
- 3 Don't exercise when you are injured, sick, or running a temperature
- 4 Don't over-strain during exercise
- 5 Don't hold your breath during exercise
- 6 Always warm up

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# the apple-a-day way

a vital part of achieving change. We need a horizon to aim for but we also need to make it close enough that we can see it. If I want to run the Great North Run – which, incidentally, I did this year with the help of the BUPA training plan. Marvellous! – but haven't run a mile, then I need to set my initial goal of one mile. My vision is the Great North Run but my first goal is one mile. When I can run a mile, then my goal is two miles... and so on... until I find myself so close to my vision that I can set my goal as the Great North Run. So many people fail to set realistic mini goals

and set cliff-leaping targets which are doomed to fail. Have patience and pace yourself.

**Find support from like-minded people who want the same things as you.**

NONE of us gets through life alone. We need to accept help from people at some point in our lives. Support and encouragement are crucial to success.

Find people who have the same goal as you and act as buddies for each other giving encouragement and the odd prod if needs be. Have you ever joined a gym with a friend

and found that even if you don't feel like it, you'll go because you've arranged it and don't want to let them down? Having a buddy will help you stay the distance and you can act as motivational coaches for each other.

**Be flexible. If you fall off the log, don't beat yourself up, keep going.** NO-ONE is perfect so we're bound to slip up once in a while. The key is to put it behind you and resolve to keep going. So you ate a huge chocolate cake or missed exercise for a few days... don't beat yourself up and don't give up, keep walking

towards your goal. Persistence pays off.

**Celebrate the small achievements.** WHEN you achieve each small step, celebrate. Treat yourself to something that won't make you feel guilty – a book or flowers or music.

The vital ingredients to lasting change are motivation, patience and persistence. You really can make changes if you let go of the quick fix magic wand ideas and take life one day at a time. Don't heap the New Year pressure on yourself. Remember... an apple a day.

● **Juliette Lee is a life coach and inspirational speaker. Based in Richmond, North Yorkshire, she motivates and inspires people to create more vibrant and fulfilling and lives. Juliette can be contacted on (01748) 823010 or www.juliettelee.co.uk.**

# NE health



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## Exercise Tips ▼

- 7 Always cool down
- 8 Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise
- 9 Avoid heavy meals for about 2 hours before energetic exercise
- 10 Use sun screen, hats, visors, and sunglasses during outdoor daytime exercise
- 11 Use the right equipment and wear the right clothes for exercise
- 12 Work at an effective, yet comfortable, intensity level. You should be able to carry on a normal conversation while working out

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**NHS**

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Consultations are taking place on proposals to change the way that strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and the ambulance service are structured in the North East.

There are a number of public meetings being held throughout January and February to which members of the public are invited to attend.

To find out details of a meeting in your area log onto [www.ntwha.nhs.uk](http://www.ntwha.nhs.uk) or [www.cdtvha.nhs.uk](http://www.cdtvha.nhs.uk) or ring the communications team on (0191) 210 6422. Copies of the consultation documents are also on the websites.

If you intend to be at one of the meetings and have any special requirements please ring the communications team or email [consultation@ntwsha.nhs.uk](mailto:consultation@ntwsha.nhs.uk)

**A 2 Z**

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\* Terms and conditions apply. See the website for details.

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