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Woman's Weekly

31 December 2017

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Hello!



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In The Swing Of Things

There's a lot in this issue that celebrates people who are taking to mid-later life by storm. I was drawn to the feature on page 14 about the woman who's begun an apprenticeship at this age. It makes me think of my parents, Mick and Gill, who are in their sixties and have taken to this stage of their lives like ducks to water. They're moving out of my family home in East London, where they've lived for the past 26 years, so it's the end of an era for them, and for me and my siblings.

I feel I'm at an age now where I see my parents as the individuals they are, separate from their role as my mum and dad. Though I'll miss them being round the corner, I'm excited that they get to start a new chapter. They're moving to the beautiful Peak District, which will be great for country escapes away from London. Fingers crossed Dad will allow me a family discount for bed and board!

*Teresa Teresa Conway,
Knitting Editor*

On Top Of Their Game

Mum and Dad at the highest point of The Roaches in the Peak District, which will soon be their new home.



Bed And Brunch?

Hopefully, my parents will be taking note of the delicious recipes on page 28. I expect five-star service on my visits!

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Welcome To Woman's

Letter Of The Week

£25

I was very interested to read the article about Pat Clarke, 'I don't find working in a Prison bleak, there's so much going on' (14th November). It's so inspiring to read that Pat believes her job as a female prison officer has provided her with the most rewarding work of her career. I'm sure as well as being a rewarding role, there must be daily challenges – but how lovely to read that Pat's positive attitude shines through. It's great that Pat helps prisoners to get vocational training and a job on release. I'm glad that she can switch off at the end of the day,

especially as she works long hours. The article has helped me to think even more about prison officers, their vital role and the people they work with and help every day.

Michelle King,
Bishop's Stortford,
Herts

'I Don't Find Working In A Prison Bleak There's So Much Going On'

What's life really like as a female prison officer? Pat Clarke tells David Mills why it's the most rewarding job she's ever done!

Think of a prison officer as a job that's a bit dull and boring. You're just there to keep the prisoners in line and make sure they don't cause any trouble. But for Pat Clarke, a female prison officer, it's the most rewarding job she's ever done. She's been a prison officer for 14 years and she's found that there's so much going on in a prison that it's not just about keeping the prisoners in line. It's about helping them to get vocational training and a job on release. It's about helping them to get on with their lives after they've been in prison. It's about helping them to get on with their lives after they've been in prison. It's about helping them to get on with their lives after they've been in prison.



❖ Thank you for telling us your story, Michelle. **We love to hear from you, so do get in touch if you have something to say**

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

This is Godfry the Goldfish. He was once a lovely shade of gold but has got whiter and whiter over the years (just like me!)

Carole Casan,
Tiverton, Devon



Facebook Feedback

What do you like to do on a rainy day?

Rachel Woj

I get our big craft box out with my daughter and make something – probably sparkly! Or if we're feeling adventurous, grab our wellies and coats and walk our dog.

Julie Stone

I love walking with our dog Millie – we both love splashing in the puddles. We like a snooze on the sofa afterwards.

Ros Hart

I look for easy patterns for some elderly ladies to knit! I visit them and we have a knitting session!

Sarah Boyer

Mostly the same things as we do on dry days, just in waterproofs and wellies!

Pauline Burke

Sit down all cosy in front of the fire with hubby, a good book and a nice cup of tea.

Where I Read My

I read my WW in Gran Canaria while on a Mediterranean Cruise.

Joyce Morgan,
Melton Park,
Newcastle upon Tyne

❖ We'd love to see where you read your copy of *Woman's Weekly*. **The more exotic, the better!**



A Cup Of Tea With

Barbara Taylor Bradford

❖ Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE, 84, is a best-selling British-American novelist with a staggering 32 novels under her belt. The Yorkshire-born lass is writing daily, so we called her for a chat in her New York home...

How do you take your tea?
I like English breakfast tea with lemon, never milk. I had it with milk years ago but I really like it with a wedge of lemon and a sweetener. I also like a special tea that comes from Harrogate and funnily enough it's called Taylor's tea but it's nothing to do with me.

Who would you most like to have a cup of tea with?
Elizabeth I. I'm a big fan of Elizabeth Tudor, I think she was one of our greatest monarchs. I love her deviousness... that she could look the Ambassador of Spain in the eye and say, 'But I would never let Walter Raleigh attack Spanish ships,' when she was encouraging it. She was also a great survivor and I write about women who survive, warrior women - I would love a cup of tea with her and to pick her brains.

What is your favourite biscuit to have with your tea? And do you dunk it?
I love ginger biscuits. The thing about dunking, I'm not very good at it because somehow half of the biscuit goes into the tea so I don't dunk. But I also knew a Scottish nanny and she was always giving me boxes of shortbread so I like those and we can get them here in New York.

Where is home for you now?
I have lived in New York for 53 years because after I married my

husband we lived in New York and California, but now we don't have a place in California. We used to have a London apartment but we gave that up, so we're actually based in New York. This Christmas it will be our 54th wedding anniversary.

Would you ever like to star in your own movie adaptation of your book?
No, I'm not an actress, I'm a writer - I think you should stick with what you do best. I want time to look at the movies because I haven't seen them since last year and looking at them always gives me a thrill.

When you're not writing, how do you spend your spare time?
We mostly travel - we come back to London, we like to go on a cruise, we go to LA and we may go more to the theatre. We like entertaining

friends. We lead a busy life, which I think is important.

Aside from your own books, what are your favourite books to read?
I've been reading a lot of books about the Victorian era because I'm writing a book that's set in that period and I just finished reading the most marvellous biography of Charles Dickens, by Claire Tomalin, it's fascinating.

What is the secret to looking fab at 84?
Despite my age I behave like a 50-year-old woman, being busy and active with your mind is important. It keeps me young.
❖ Barbara Taylor Bradford's new book, *Secrets of Cavendon: A Novel*, is in bookshops now.



'I think you should stick with what you do best'



This is my handsome boy Eddie getting his beauty sleep. He's a short-haired exotic and is quite a character.
Christine Johnson, Dartford, Kent

❖ Got a pet pic that makes you smile? We can give it a good home



What You're Wearing

◀ Nathalie Malevergne, 47

Tell us about your look...

I love layering in winter, and adore suede, faux fur and leather. I often scan eBay and check out charity shops for original pieces - you can unearth treasure! Today, my jacket is from a market in France and my top was made by my mother. My leather skirt is an eBay find, and I've had my boots and bag for years.

And the best bit of your body?
My skin.

Jean Hand, 62 ▶

Tell us about your look...

I like good fabrics, and look for styles that'll flatter my figure. This coat and scarf combination is from Zara. I love the coat's relaxed, easy shape, and it's a good length on me. My T-shirt and jeans are both M&S. I spotted my pumps in Sainsbury's (Tu), and my bag was a charity shop buy.

And the best bit of your body?
Everything is in the right proportion.

Olivia ▶ Blake, 30

Tell us about your look...

I've always been inspired by the dress sense of women such as Audrey Hepburn. I like simple, classic pieces you can wear in any season and won't go out of style. My favourite shops are Karen Millen and Ted Baker. This pink coat is from Ted Baker. My faux-fur scarf is Rino & Pelle. My jeans are Levi's and my boots are from Carvela.

And the best bit of your body?
My smile.



You Wore It Well Ann Wilkinson, 1958

This is me on my wedding day, wearing a cream brocade dress with gold embroidery. The bridesmaids wore dark-red velvet with red-and-white headbands. My head-dress was made from cream flowers and pearls.

We'd love to see how great you looked - in any era up to and including the 1980s. Please send a good-quality photo with your name, address and daytime phone number clearly written on the back, to: Fashion Dept, *Woman's Weekly*, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. Photos will be returned.

This Is The

Book ✓

Giselle

Get tickets for the greatest of all romantic ballets. Peter Wright's production of Marius Petipa's tale of betrayal, the supernatural, and a love that transcends death is glorious.

❖ 19 January - 9 March.

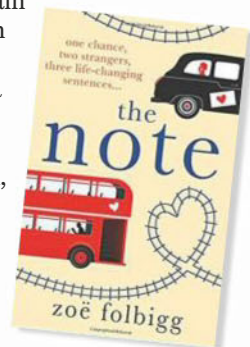
Visit roh.org.uk/productions/giselle-by-peter-wright



Book Choice

One very ordinary day, Maya Flowers sees a new commuter board her train to London - and knows immediately and irrevocably that this is The One. But, from that day on, the man on the train has his head in a book, never noticing Maya sitting just down the carriage. Until, one day, Maya plucks up the courage to give the stranger a note asking him out for a drink. And so begins a story of missed opportunities and finding happiness where you least expect it. Based on the author's true story, *The Note* is a life-affirming, uplifting reminder that taking a chance can change everything.

❖ *The Note* by Zoë Folbigg, paperback, £7.99, Aria



We love letters

Woman's Weekly,
161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP
PS. It really helps when you put your details in capitals

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e Week To...

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Christmas at Kew

Follow the sparkling trail of more than a million twinkling lights, illuminating heritage trees and buildings through the Gardens. Fairy tale meets fantasy in a world of singing trees, larger-than-life flora, ribbons of light, giant baubles and a flickering Fire Garden. The Palm House leaps into life with a dazzling show of laser beams, jets of light and kaleidoscopic projections.

✦ **Until 1 January 2018.**

For more information, visit kew.org



Visit ✓

Charles II Art & Power

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, is home to a new exhibition showing the rich and opulent world of Charles II's court, and the role of the arts in the re-establishment of the Stuart monarchy.

✦ **Until 13 May 2018. For information, visit royalcollection.org.uk**

Wicked Wit

You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred.

Woody Allen (1935-)

Lovely Thing

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YOUR WEEK

What your stars have in store with astrologer **Barbara Goldsmith**



Aries 21 Mar - 20 Apr

If you're feeling like making big changes - especially connected with home and family - a move could be in store for you.

Taurus 21 Apr - 21 May

Time to be proactive in your relationships. Jupiter is bringing good fortune and potential opportunities. Take action to make things happen!

Gemini 22 May - 21 Jun

Finances are highlighted. What would you like to change? Make a list, and take at least one action daily.

Cancer 22 Jun - 23 Jul

Big personal changes are underway. It's time to be the true you. If you don't want to do something, speak up!

Leo 24 Jul - 23 Aug

Quiet time and peace are what you need this week. Keep a journal of your dreams, as they could be prophetic and meaningful.

Virgo 24 Aug - 23 Sep

Your social circle could be changing, and that's fine. Friends may fall by the wayside, but you'll make new ones.

Libra 24 Sep - 23 Oct

Now's a good time to study or deepen your knowledge of a subject you're passionate about. Serious travel plans are starred now, too.

Scorpio 24 Oct - 22 Nov

If you're signing a contract, starting a new job or making an important agreement, this is a favourable time.

Sagittarius 23 Nov - 21 Dec

A great week financially, especially if you've been working towards a specific goal. Treat yourself.

Capricorn 22 Dec - 20 Jan

Think carefully about your goals and dreams for this year. The world is your oyster - time to make changes.

Aquarius 21 Jan - 19 Feb

Take stock of your health and create an action plan. You can achieve a great deal with positive intention.

Pisces 20 Feb - 20 Mar

This is a good time to work on creating a new business or doing something creative. Resolve to do at least one thing you enjoy daily.

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'If I'm Not Wearing Make-up No One Gives Me A Second Look'

The *Birds of a Feather* star talks about her image, 'friends for life' and how she'd love to take *Young Frankenstein* to Broadway...

We think we're in charge of our own destiny,' says comedy actress Lesley Joseph. 'But we're not. Look at me. I'm 72 now and I've just had the busiest five years of my career.'

In no particular order, she starred as Miss Hannigan in a national tour of the musical, *Annie* and partnered Anton

Du Beke in 2016's *Strictly*. (She was the oldest contestant in the show's history.) Before that, and along with co-stars Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson, she enjoyed a sell-out theatre tour as man-eating Dorian Green in *Birds of a Feather*, which was then recommissioned by ITV (it had originally been a big BBC hit in the 90s), the new series attracting huge audiences.

And now, she's having a high old time as Frau Blücher in the West End stage production of Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*.

No wonder she's in barnstorming form. And quite a lot of this good fortune, she says, can be laid at

WORDS: RICHARD BARBER. PHOTOS: GETTY, REX, SHUTTERSTOCK, PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES



The *Birds* are friends for life



the door of *Strictly*.

Highly respected choreographer and director Susan Stroman has been over from Broadway licking *Young Frankenstein* into shape alongside the legendary Mr Brooks.

'Stro, as we call her, told me I had to be in good physical shape because the show involves a lot of movement,' says Lesley. 'Luckily, I'd kept trim after *Strictly*, so that stood me in good stead.'

Even Lesley's clothes are testament to that. Today she's dressed in a figure-skimming, full-length jersey dress that was a gift from Daisy Lowe after they both appeared last year on *Strictly*.

'We all still meet up regularly,' says Lesley. 'There's Danny Mac, Louise Redknapp, Daisy herself, Gorka, Giovanni, Kevin and Karen [Clifton], Janette and Aljaž [Škorjanec] and Anton. We've remained firm friends. The show was pretty traumatic because you were so exposed and we share that bond. But the tour was bliss. Dancing the Charleston with Anton every night? What's not to like?'

Lesley's adored mother, Rebecca, would be proud of the shape her daughter is in. A fitness fanatic, she finally moved on last year, aged 103.

'She only gave up badminton when she hit 90,' says Lesley. 'And she continued playing



As Frau Blücher in *Young Frankenstein*, with Ross Noble as Igor

tennis beyond that. She was line dancing until 96 and did yoga all the time, but broke a bone in her hip when she was 99 and that seemed to trigger the onset of dementia. She was an amazing woman.'

Lesley emulates her mother in that she does regular yoga sessions. There certainly doesn't look to be much spare flesh on her right now.

'When *Birds* was recommissioned, I made it my business to shed a few pounds because Dorian always wears body-conscious clothes. Now,

I was anxious that Dorian shouldn't be just a comedy cut-out'

I walk everywhere. I don't like being whisked around by hired cars. I travel by Tube and often get off a few stops early and walk into the West End, or along the Mall or through St James's Park. You don't see anything unless you walk.'

And she doesn't get recognised much. 'If I'm not wearing make-up, no one gives me a second look,' says Lesley.

No such luck if she's decked out like Dorian, a part that Lesley made very much her own by adding a third dimension of vulnerability.

'I was anxious that she shouldn't just be a comedy cut-out wearing outrageous clothes. I wanted the audience to see the soft underbelly beneath all the brashness.

'That's what gave her heart. We've done 140 episodes now, so it's inevitable, I think, that you dig a little deeper

into the characters. We've always said that we don't think of *Birds* as a sitcom, more as a comedy drama.'

Part of the show's enduring success, says Lesley, is the match made in heaven with Pauline and Linda, neither of whom she'd worked with when she first met them at The Ritz in 1989.

'They'd known each other since childhood - I was the outsider. I'll never forget it. Pauline turned up in trainers. I was amazed they let her in. Then she ordered a glass of champagne and asked the waiter to add some water to it.

'We clicked immediately. We'll all be friends for life. People have tried to suggest that the egos of three women performing together would spell disaster. But that simply has never been the case.'

Frau Blücher, says Lesley, is a career-defining role right up there alongside Dorian.

'When we started rehearsing *Young Frankenstein* at the end of July, everything was fantastic. Then, two weeks in, I got a bit shaky.

A week later - I had no idea why they'd hired me. Mel had arrived at rehearsals and it was the scariest thing ever.

'On one occasion, I think he stopped my big song five times, by which point my heart was hammering in my chest. But slowly, slowly, my confidence built up again to that moment when you're performing in front of an audience - and suddenly I'd fully entered Mel's world, inhabited by the most extraordinary characters, all of whom make sense in the fantastic scenario he's created.'

Hadley Fraser plays the title role, while Summer Strallen - one of Bonnie Langford's many singing and dancing nieces - is leading lady, Inga.

'And I'm loving working with Ross Noble,' says Lesley. 'He's Frankenstein's hunchbacked servant, Igor. Mad as a hatter, of course, but perfect for the

role. Do I think it's good? Honestly, if I take a step back, I think it's absolutely brilliant.'

So life couldn't get much better, but still Lesley strives for even more variety.

'One of the people I admire most is Imelda Staunton who was truly amazing as Momma Rose in *Gypsy*, but can then turn up in the West End appearing in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* before heading off to the National to star in the revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies*. She manages to cover the whole spectrum and I've never felt quite on that level.

'I'd love to do a serious drama on television or Chekhov at the National but



Dancing with Anton Du Beke

then, if I was told I could have that or *Young Frankenstein* working with Mel Brooks, well, no contest. There's no shame being involved with popular entertainment that makes people leave the theatre on a high. I floated out of the Dominion after *An American in Paris*. It blew me away.'

As for retirement... 'Maybe one day, but while I'm fit and healthy, I'll never quit. I mean, supposing the offer came to take *Young Frankenstein* to Broadway. Well, I'm not going to say no to that. It's one of my life's enduring ambitions to perform there.'

❖ *Young Frankenstein is at the Garrick Theatre: youngfrankenstein.co.uk*



On the town with daughter Elizabeth

Traditionally Bonkers!

Each year, thousands of people flock to rural villages and towns around England to participate in odd, sometimes dangerous, and often wacky, events all in the name of fun. What an utterly eccentric bunch you may think! However, many people consider these annual traditions, with some customs dating back to the Middle Ages, to be the core of their rural communities, bringing young and old together for merriment and joviality. Fortunately, the good people of High Wycombe no longer throw rotten fruit at their mayor during the annual weigh-in (next weigh-in Saturday 19 May 2018), but you can still be guaranteed a hint of danger at other events up and down the country, so mark your 2018 calendars and you won't miss out.

From wife carrying to cheese chasing, Louise O'Bryan looks at the origins of England's wonderfully curious village traditions and why they remain popular today

PHOTOS: VISITNEWQUAY.ORG, TRIONIUM.COM/WIFE, STRAWBEAR.ORG.UK, ALAMY



WIFE CARRYING 8 April 2018 - Dorking, Surrey

This peculiar event where men carry their partner along a hilly 380m course, was revived in 2008 after a mere 900-year break. The race is believed to have evolved from a Viking invasion that saw women carried off against their will, however, these days the women participants are far more willing, as long as they are wearing a helmet, are over 18 and weigh over 50kg.

Competitor and organiser, Rob McCaffrey, thinks the success of the race lies in the trust formed between competitors. 'The carrier gets to really understand the physical corporeal essence of their

partner. By the time you have been over the hay bales and carried your partner to the top of the hill, you feel every ounce of them.' Let's hope the cash prize, barrel of ale and a chance to compete in the world championships in Finland makes it all worthwhile.

DON'T MISS Carriers who drop their 'wives' must take three steps back before remounting, so keep an eye out for cheats!

Helpful Hint

Spectators are encouraged to bring their own water pistols and buckets of water to staff the 'Splash Zone'.

Wife carriers take 'to have and to hold' to new lengths



CORNISH HURLING

Shrove Tuesday (13 February 2018) - St Columb Major, Cornwall

This rough and tumble game is one of Cornwall's most ancient customs, thought to date back more than 500 years. It takes place on Shrove Tuesday, and originally involved townsmen and countrymen vying to keep possession of a silver-coated applewood ball, roughly the size of a cricket ball, which was 'thrown up' in the Market Square.

These days, it still starts with a 'throw up', but now involves men from

all backgrounds who tackle, snatch and throw the ball into one of two goals set two miles apart. The winner is then carried back to the Market Square, where he visits each pub and ceremoniously dips the ball in a gallon of beer.

Marco Ciarleglio has won the event a number of times and explains how much it means to him. 'It's a huge honour to be involved in such an old tradition, but to win means even more. The game involves a huge amount of sportsmanship, with honesty playing a key role, so winning

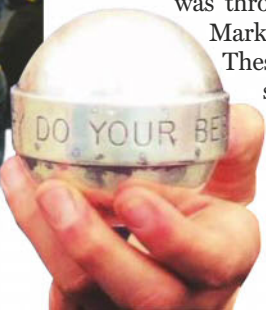
gives you a huge sense of pride. If you decide to cheat, the best thing to do is get out of town.' **DON'T MISS** The game is put on hold momentarily if a member of the public wishes to handle the ball, which is said to bring health and fertility.

Helpful Hint

Don't expect to do much shopping on the day as local shopkeepers bar windows and doors to avoid damage from the crowds that fill the tiny town.



The men of St Columb Major battle for the silver ball (right)





Is Whittlesea's bear the last straw in village traditions?

WHITTLESEA STRAW BEAR FESTIVAL

12-14 January 2018 - Whittlesea, Cambs

Is it a bird? Is it a hedge? No it's a man covered in straw of course! No one is quite sure when it started, but this ancient Fenland custom of parading a straw bear through the streets of Whittlesea in Cambridgeshire, followed by teams pulling a plough, marks Plough Monday or the traditional start of the agricultural year. The spectacle had fallen into decline but in 1980 a local folk history enthusiast, Brian Kell, revived this historic custom and is still the principal organiser some 40 years on. He believes it's the community that has kept it alive all these years. 'The town sees the event as being theirs, something everyone can truly identify with, and this is helped by the inclusion of local schools in the programme, presenting simple homespun entertainment in a traditional format.'

DON'T MISS The burning of the straw bear on Sunday - hopefully without anyone inside!

Helpful Hint

Get yourself a programme so you don't miss where and when the straw bear makes an appearance as there are several processions on the Saturday.

TAR BARRELS

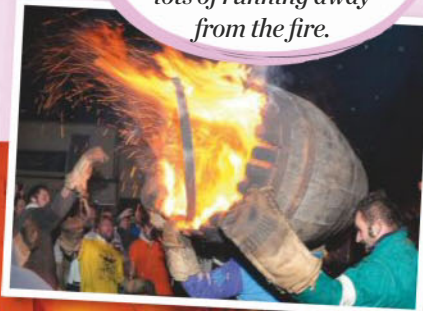
5 November 2018 - Ottery St Mary, Devon

Some claim flaming barrels were used to rid the town of bad spirits, others say the origins are linked with the gunpowder plot of 1605. Whatever the history of flaming tar barrels, this perilous and tremendously dangerous event is surprisingly still legal and therefore attracts thousands of spectators who pack the streets of Ottery until midnight. So if you fancy dodging burly Devonshire farmers rushing at you with burning wood barrels, then go soon before health and safety shut it down.

DON'T MISS Ottery's giant bonfire closes the events, with a ceremonial Guy, made by local schoolchildren, placed on top.

Helpful Hint

If you have young children or those who find walking difficult, it's probably best you avoid this event, as there's lots of running away from the fire.



Ottery St Mary's festival is a barrel of fun - and fire



It's 'sheer' madness on Cooper's Hill

CHEESE ROLLING

28 May 2018 - Cooper's Hill, Gloucestershire

The origins, and rules for that matter, remain a mystery, but cheese rolling was first officially reported in the 1800s and has taken place every year since, except for three dates that included an outbreak of foot and mouth, and a cancellation by the police due to (genuine) safety concerns. The menacingly steep incline of

Cooper's Hill is the ideal setting to watch competitors race to be the first to cross the finish line after the rolling cheeses, which reach speeds of 70mph.

DON'T MISS Read the safety notices before attending. The hill has a 1-in-1 gradient in some spots and is incredibly steep, which can make spectating a challenge in itself.

Only the bravest and fastest can claim the cheese



Helpful Hint

Beware if you're a little on the squeamish side. This is a truly dangerous event and competitors are often injured, think broken bones and concussion.

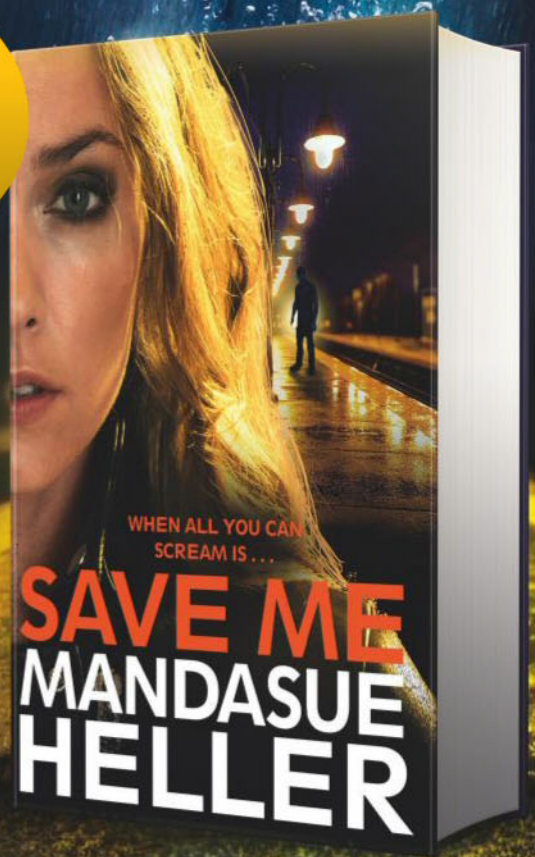
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It's A Funny Old World

'They're great friends: generous and excellent company. What could go wrong?'

It seemed such a marvellous idea. I cleared the diary, and booked some super-cheap winter sun in Gran Canaria.

'Brilliant!' said our friends. 'Why don't we join you?' I could hardly say no, and besides, we'd discussed going on holiday with them before. They're great friends: generous and excellent company. What could go wrong? And the first three days went smoothly, apart from Steve's irritating habit of leaning over my shoulder and trying to complete my crossword.

The Beloved and I have our tried-and-trusted holiday routine. Explore, swim and relax during the day: back to our rooms at 5pm to rest, read and shower, before an aperitif in the bar. Lizzie and Steve, however, preferred to drink their duty free in their room and invited us to partake. Umbrage was definitely taken when we said we'd be happier in the bar.

The local village was brimming with enticing restaurants and Lizzie and Steve joined us at La Bamba, a pleasant, bustling eatery that had rave online reviews.

'What wine do you recommend?' asked John. The manager pointed out a reasonably priced Spanish white. 'Lovely!' he said.

'No, we'll have the house white!' piped Lizzie. Ah. The house white turned out to be akin to insecticide. And then the conversation strayed onto Brexit. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife.

We stumbled through the rest of the week, and somehow managed to avoid any more conflagrations. We drank warm G&Ts in their room to keep the peace, then ate out in the evening while they dined at the hotel.

The final evening loomed. I'd picked an adorable, miniscule



This week's columnist:
**Actress and comedian
Dillie Keane**

restaurant. Steve and Lizzie announced they'd join us. Our delightful German host greeted us with a complimentary sherry and showed us what was fresh that day – a basket of mushrooms from the mountains, plus a cornucopia of mouth-watering seafood.

'Ooh, delicious!' I said, ever the enthusiastic foodie.

'Preentious,' muttered Lizzie. 'And I've had swordfish before. Steve, didn't we have swordfish in Sicily?'

'Eh?' said Steve.

Perhaps we would prefer mussels? Or tuna, caught that morning?

'Don't like tuna,' Lizzie muttered again. 'Can't bear the way the woman is taking over.'

Fifteen minutes of this followed. John ordered a bottle of wine that the patron recommended. It was gorgeous.

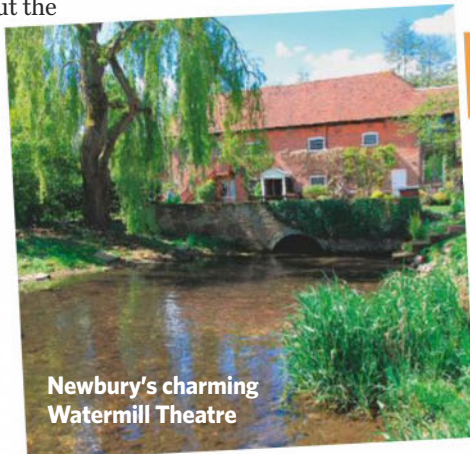
'Rather ordinary,' said Lizzie.

My patience gave out. I said, as politely as I could manage, 'Look Lizzie, I like it here, so if you don't like it, don't spoil it for all of us.'

And out she flounced, followed by the hapless Steve who had no idea what was happening as his hearing aid batteries had died.

And that was that for the holiday.

The friendship has never been the same since. At parties, we wave cheerily but we don't cross the room. And since then, my Beloved has never again suggested we go on holiday with friends. Once bitten...



Newbury's charming
Watermill Theatre

My Funny Old Week

What I've bought A dehydrator! Sixteen years ago, I planted four apple trees. Now they're fruiting like billy-oh and I'm determined to use them. I shall be eating dried apple all year!

Where I've been The Watermill Theatre near Newbury. Quality productions, lovely food in an idyllic setting – what's not to like?

Who I've met My long-lost cousin Jane. It's extraordinary that we work in the same industry and have never met till now when we're both in our 60s!

NEXT WEEK
Cheryl Baker

‘Who Says I Can’t Be An Apprentice In My 60s?’

It may surprise you to know that apprenticeships for older people are available across Britain, with some time out in college for work-related training

Kath Lockhart, 62, from Wadebridge, is a customer services administrator for Cornwall Care. She says...

I started my apprenticeship last July – it’s in business administration. I’ll get a Level 3 NVQ diploma and it takes 18 months to complete.

I work in a residential care home, dealing with the money side of things for the clients and the clients’ families. I love my job. But over the 20 years that I’ve been doing it, the job has changed. I’ve had very little training, I’ve just picked things up along the way.

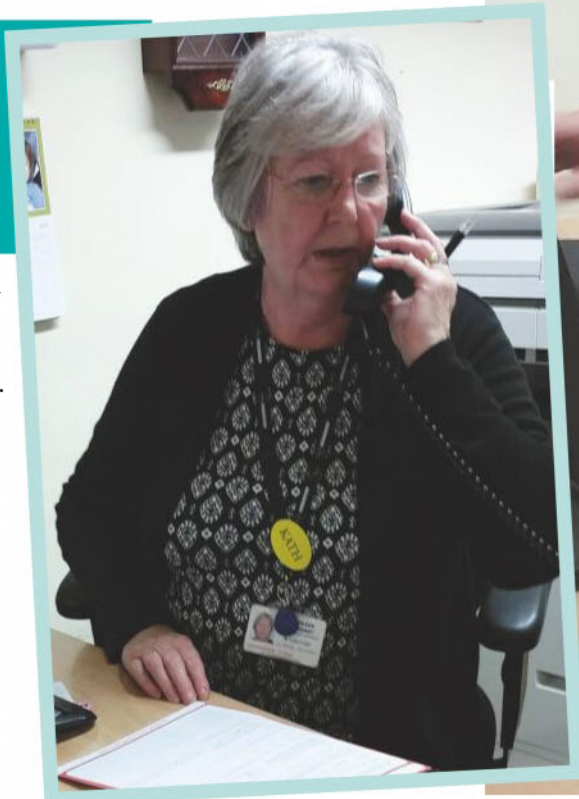
So when this apprenticeship was offered, I really wanted to do it and my manager supported me.

Between September to December last year I had one training day in college every other week. Then I had to take exams. I did maths, English, IT and business-related subjects.

In the classes, I liked interacting with the younger people. I realised the experience I’ve had at work makes a difference. It made the training much simpler because of what I’d done already.

Now my trainer comes to observe me at work every six weeks. We discuss what else I need to do in order to complete the different stages of the course.

My husband Ken, 70, was in the



merchant navy but he’s retired now. It can be hard trying to find the time to study after working all day but I’m very determined and Ken is supportive.

‘The experience I’ve had at work made the training much simpler’

The apprenticeship, and passing the exams, makes me feel like I’m achieving something. Now, when a supervisory role comes up at another

Cornwall Care home, I’ll be in a good position to go for it. It’s opened up a world of opportunities for me.

Adele Bull, 38, is the deputy team leader for business and professional area at Truro and Penwith College, where Kath studies. She says...





Tamsyn Crook, 41, is the care home manager at St Breock, the residential home where Kath works. She says...



I'm the manager at St Breock – one of 16 care homes owned by the non-profit charity Cornwall Care.

Out of the 52 staff at the home, three of them are completing apprenticeships at the moment, but Kath is the oldest. We are lucky at Cornwall Care to have a training department at central office and people can earn a diploma.

Learning is important. Even though it does take time away from work, and staff do have to go to college, the long-term benefits for the employer and the employee outweigh that.

Over time, I've worked with individuals reluctant to do more training, but when I see potential I do encourage them. There was another lady over 60 who was a bit reluctant and said she couldn't, not at her age. But we managed to persuade her and she really enjoyed it.

Kath is already a wonderful administrator. She was very experienced prior to taking up her apprenticeship, so it's partly about building up her confidence. Also, in the long term, she wants to be a more senior administrator within the company so her gaining more experience with the diploma will help her achieve that.

It's important to develop your staff, for them to have job satisfaction and for them to feel acknowledged and appreciated within their work. This improves their confidence and skills, and you end up with a more experienced and knowledgeable team.

More information

Apprenticeships are available at different academic levels, and in many different fields from IT to gardening, and social care to accountancy. For more information about starting one yourself, these links and organisations are a good place to begin:

- ❖ **The Apprenticeship Guide:** apprenticeshipguide.co.uk
- ❖ **Find an apprenticeship:** findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch
- ❖ **Age UK:** ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning/looking-for-work/changing-careers

Our college has about 100 apprentices in business administration. While most are 16-18 or in their early 20s, more and more learners are in their mid-60s. That's because apprenticeships have changed – people aren't always taken on as young apprentices but are already in a role and want to upskill.

At Kath's level – business admin Level 3 – an administrator is already competent but wants to take on extra responsibilities. The diploma is possibly the equivalent to three A-levels.

It's quite a wide-ranging course, covering communications, finance and data analysis.

There are many advantages to being an older apprentice – they have loads of knowledge to draw upon. Kath has lots of value and experience which she can apply to her studies.

She's grown a lot in confidence; she probably wasn't aware at first just how much she had to offer. She respected others as well – she had a lot of experience but was happy to share, and also happy to listen to others and learn from them, too.

'There are many advantages to being an older apprentice – they have loads of knowledge to draw upon'

Is That Normal?

Got a nagging health problem? Find out if these common concerns are something to worry about

BLOOD ON THE TOILET PAPER **NO**

Common causes of rectal bleeding are piles and anal tears. 'Haemorrhoids can cause discomfort, bleeding, itching and lumps around the bottom,' says Nick West, consultant general and colorectal surgeon at Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals. 'Although they can be left alone if not causing symptoms, they may get worse over time and need more invasive procedures to treat them.'

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

It's always best to get rectal bleeding checked by your GP, but especially if blood is dark and sticky, or stools turn black or plum in colour.



A NEW MOLE AFTER A HOLIDAY **YES**

'When you've been in sunlight, new moles are common. You can develop them at any point as an adult,' says Dr Joanna Gach, consultant dermatologist at Coventry's BMI The Meriden Hospital.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

'If a new mole looks different to the others, or if any mole grows bigger, changes colour or shape, itches or bleeds, show it to your GP,' says Dr Gach. Changing moles can be a sign of skin cancer.

STARTING SNORING **YES**

It's normal to start snoring as you get older. Professor Yves Kamami, ENT surgeon at The Private Clinic of Harley Street says: 'As we age we have a loss of hormones, and the soft palate tissue becomes longer, thicker and looser, vibrating more with the airflow linked to our natural breathing.' Cut back on alcohol, avoid smoking and spicy food, sleep on your side (rather than your back) and lose weight if you need to.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

Snoring can sometimes be a sign of a more serious underlying condition, such as Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome. 'Sleepiness and drowsiness during the day as a result of this syndrome can lead to heart rhythm problems, heart attack, high blood pressure, strokes, glaucoma and, after many years, even to Alzheimer's,' says Prof Kamami. Talk to your GP, who can seek the help of an ENT specialist if needed.



DIFFERENT-SIZED BREASTS **YES**

This is common, says Kevin Hancock, consultant plastic surgeon at Liverpool Women's Hospital. 'Most women will have a slight difference, but with some, it's a cup size or more.' If it really bothers you, surgery can balance you out. In some areas of the country, the NHS will cover this.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

If one breast suddenly changes shape, it needs investigating.

A HEADACHE EVERY DAY **NO**

Headaches are normal, but not every day, says headache specialist Professor Anne MacGregor. 'It could be stress, eye strain, dehydration or, if you take painkillers daily, a reaction to those.' Try making sure you drink plenty of fluids and have regular screen breaks throughout the day.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

If your headache is severe with tingling, numbness or vision problems, or if you have health issues including high blood pressure, then go and see your GP.



FINDING HAIR ON YOUR BRUSH **YES**

'We lose around 100 hairs a day, so I tell women not to panic if they see a lot on their brush,' says hair restoration surgeon Dr Bessam Farjo from Manchester's Farjo Hair Institute. Changes in hormone levels are also a common cause of hair loss, says Dr Thomy Kouremada-Zioga, hair transplant surgeon at The Private Clinic of Harley Street: 'If you're post-menopausal, then it's not uncommon for hair to thin.'

Too much stress or over-styling can make things worse. Eat plenty of protein (eggs, fish, lean meat) to help keep hair strong and healthy, and wash it regularly.

Dr Kouremada-Zioga says: 'Using a shampoo that's free of the

chemical SLS

(Sodium Lauryl Sulfate) can help prevent hair loss, as well as using conditioner on the hair shafts.'

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

If your scalp is visible through your hair, see your GP. It may be female pattern baldness, which can be treated. Conditions such as diabetes, thyroid problems, anaemia and hormonal disorders including polycystic ovaries or lupus can thin the hair, so rule these out before seeing a hair specialist.



ONLY NEEDING TO MOVE YOUR BOWELS TWICE A WEEK **YES**

'Anything from three times a day to just twice a week is fine,' says gastroenterologist Dr Anton Emmanuel.

If constipation is a problem, try gradually introducing more fibre (fruit, veg and cereals) to your diet, drinking plenty of fluids and exercising regularly - a minimum of five 30-minute sessions a week.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

Long-term constipation can signal coeliac disease. Also see a GP if your bowel habits change as this could be a sign of a more serious underlying condition, such as cancer, and it does need to be checked out.

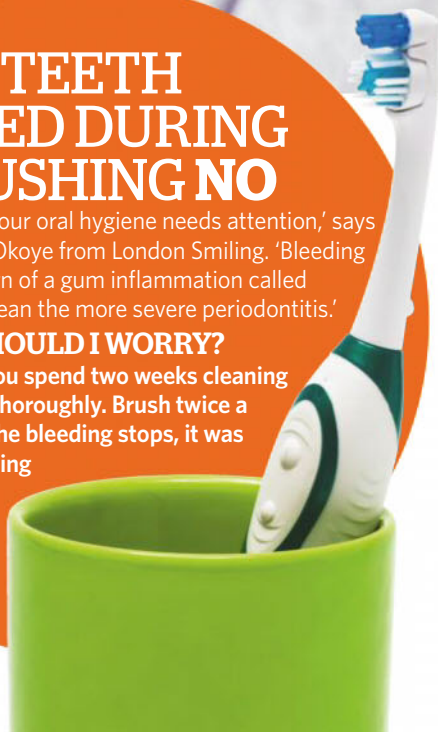


TEETH BLEED DURING BRUSHING **NO**

'At best it's a sign your oral hygiene needs attention,' says dentist Dr Uchenna Okoye from London Smiling. 'Bleeding gums can be a sign of a gum inflammation called gingivitis - or it can mean the more severe periodontitis.'

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

Dr Okoye suggests you spend two weeks cleaning your teeth really thoroughly. Brush twice a day and floss. If the bleeding stops, it was gingivitis. If nothing changes, see your dentist.



A FLUTTERING HEART **NO**

'There could be something amiss with your lifestyle - too much stress, caffeine or alcohol - or a problem with the heart itself,' says consultant cardiologist Dr Ameet Bakhai.

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY?

The heart should beat steadily, so if you notice it racing, fluttering or beating erratically, talk to your GP.



The Cashmere Jumper

With some cashmere jumpers having a super-expensive price tag, check out M&S cashmere for sweaters that are also machine washable. The great thing with cashmere is that it can be worn year after year, so think of it as an investment buy.

Far right: Jumper, **£139**, trousers, **£39.50**, both sizes 8-22, Autograph at M&S



£89, sizes 6-24, M&S

Also available in pink



Trousers, **£120**, sizes 8-16, shoes **£36**, both Wallis

£24.99, sizes 6-10, H&M



The Leather Trousers

For maximum wear opt for black, they go with everything and are so comfortable! If you prefer faux leather or fancy a different colour, try this burgundy pair.

The Mules

Best teamed with jeans or cropped trousers, this slip-on style is here to stay. We love the pretty embroidery on this pair.



£59.99, Violeta by Mango

Luxe For Less

Be sale-shopping savvy with these pieces that will look good forever

The Gilet

Perfect for layering when you don't need a big coat and a great way to inject some texture and colour into an outfit.

Top, **£26**, gilet, **£55**, jeans, **£28**, all sizes 10-32, JD Williams

£19.99, sizes s-l, TK Maxx



The Long Boots

The classic riding boot is always in fashion and perfect for everyday wear. This knee-high style is also available in black.

£150, Dune





The Full Skirt

This skirt is flattering on most body shapes and the floral jacquard print is great for dressing up or down.

£49.50, sizes 6-18, M&S



Skirt, £95, sizes 10-32, shoes, £22, both JD Williams

The Faux Scarf

Channel Hollywood glamour with a faux fur stole, perfect over a simple jumper or coat.



£25.99, Zara



£39.50, sizes 6-18, M&S

The Embellished Top

Sparkles and jewels aren't just for Christmas – cheer up January in an stylish top worn with jeans or a smart skirt.



The Jacket

Look out for muted tones for a coat you will wear over and over again.

Coat, £90, trousers, £39, both sizes 10-32, JD Williams

£69, sizes 8-28, Elvi



£39.50, sizes 6-22, Autograph at M&S

The Satin Top

Put away your going out dress and team this top with a satin A-line skirt for a special occasion instead.

Top, £49.99, trousers, £59.99, both sizes 6-14, Mango



The Glam Gloves

A timeless, yet very practical accessory. Everyone should own a pair, or two!

Gloves, £19.99, blazer, £99, both sizes s-l, Mango



£32, Dune



Also available in navy

Woman's Weekly Plant Offer

Super Saver Begonias

This collection of spectacular begonias bring radiant, non-stop colour to containers, beds and window boxes all summer long. Growing begonia tubers is so easy and guaranteed to make a show-stopping display! Height and spread: 50cm (12in). Supplied as tubers size 5/4.

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'Double Flowered' Mixed



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**FROM
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WW Gardening Magazine Editor Geoffrey Palmer's Tip

'From February, start begonia tubers off in well-drained,

moist compost in a warm, frost-free position in bright light. When planting begonia tubers, position them just below the compost surface with the indented side facing upwards.'



'Giant Pictoe' Mixed



'Pendula' Mixed



To order, call 0844 573 6057** and quote WWK2185Z; or complete the coupon below

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T12550	Begonia 'Giant Pictoe' Mixed x 10	£7.99		
T44834	Begonia 'Pendula' Mixed x 10	£7.99		
T10822P	Begonia x tuberhybrida 'Bumper Pack' x 40 (10 of each variety)	£19.99		
T77327P	Begonia x tuberhybrida 'Bumper Pack' x 80 (20 of each variety)	£37.98		
TCA56850P	Large Patio Pot & Saucer x 1	£9.99		
TCA59095P	Large Patio Pot & Saucer x 2	£17.99		
TCB4755I	incredibloom® Fertiliser 1 x 100g Pack	£4.99		
TCB4755Z	incredibloom® Fertiliser 1 x 750g Pack	£12.99		
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£25, Next



Two inner compartments

£35.99, Mango

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£35, M&S



NEXT WEEK
10 Of The Best Gloves

Beauty Treats For Free!

We all love a bargain, but getting deals for nothing is even better. We've rounded up the best ways to try out top beauty buys and treatments without costing you a single penny

FREE

Professional Skin Consultation

Beauty counters offer free advice on how to take care of your skin and which products suit your complexion type. Clarins is one brand that does this really well. After the consultation with one of their skin specialists, you'll be offered samples of recommended products to take away and try. Marie McKeever, head of treatment development at Clarins UK, suggests asking the following questions to get the most out of their consultation.

❖ *What services are you offering today?*

❖ *I've heard about your products but want to know more*

❖ *Are you able to analyse my skin today and tell me what I need?*

❖ *Can I try the products you've recommended on my skin today, before I decide to buy them?*

FREE

Make-up Lesson

Bobbi Brown, Lancôme, bareMinerals and Clinique are just a few of the major brands that offer free make-up lessons. Even the Duchess of Cambridge was rumoured to have picked up some tips from a department store counter before her wedding to Prince William.

BareMinerals call their lessons 'makeunders'. Their expert will match you with a foundation and then work on one half of your face, teaching you

how to create the look before getting you to copy it on the other side – it's a great way to learn techniques.

Beauty Ed Stephanie was impressed when she tried the Bobbi Brown experience at Selfridges. 'My make-up artist showed me how to create a soft, smoky look, one step at a time,' she says. 'She wrote down the products and shades on a handy face chart, and I didn't feel pressured into buying everything. It's a look I've recreated many times.'



FREE Pampering

You don't need to book into a spa to enjoy a little bit of 'me-time'. Luxury brand **Crème de la Mer** offers complimentary in-store services that are tailored to your skin concerns, from mini facials to pick-me-up eye treatments. Go to cremedelamer.co.uk/store_locator.

Recharge your weary batteries during the January sales with a free relaxing hand and arm massage at **Liz Earle**. Sit back and let the team members talk you through their range, assess your skin and demonstrate how to get the best results from their products.

Or, here's an idea - why not host

a pampering party? Lots of brands have consultants, including **The Body Shop at Home** and **Neal's Yard Remedies**, who will turn up to your house with beautiful products. Or you could try **MyShowcase**, where stylists present a curated selection of cult beauty brands from around the world. Pampering parties allow you to try before you buy, get free samples and amazing discounts not available in store. What's more, the host often gets free shopping vouchers to spend. It's the perfect way to enjoy a spot of pampering in the comfort of your own home. All you have to do is invite your friends along!

Top Tip
Book in advance as counters can get busy

FREE Personalised Products

Before you even think of paying double figures for a new beauty product, it makes sense to see how it feels on your skin before you buy.

At larger **Boots** stores, **No7** will decant foundation

into a pot for customers to take home and try, and even small amounts of their skincare, from eye cream to serum, can be sampled for free.

If you fancy trying something from the **Origins** range, any of their products can be put into a sample pot to experiment with at home. They also offer free gift-wrapping all year round.

YSL will also happily give out drams of foundation. After a consultation, Lifestyle Content Director Jayne was given a shade of **YSL Le Teint Touche Éclat** Foundation to try. 'It was the perfect colour,' she says, 'so I returned to the store and bought some.'

Beware Beauty Scams
Watch for those offers where you're promised free beauty products and just pay for delivery. Once you've signed up, companies might regularly deduct money from your account.

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Measurements: To fit sizes 81-86 (91) (97-102) cm /
32-34 (36) (38-40) in



Frilly Womens Bolero Crochet
Pattern £2.99 **Code WLD138**
Measurements: To fit sizes 76 (81-86) (91-97) cm /
30 (32-34) (36-38) in



Ladies Longline Top Crochet Pattern
£2.99 **Code WLD177**
Measurements: To fit sizes 76 (81-86) (91-97) cm /
30 (32-34)(36-38) in



Vintage Ladies Cardigan Crochet
Pattern £3.99 **Code WLD044**
Measurements: To fit sizes 81 (86) (91-97)
(102) cm / 32 (34) (36-38) (40) in



Womens Floral Bolero Crochet
Pattern £2.99 **Code WLD157**
Measurements: To fit bust sizes 81-91 (97-117) cm /
32-36 (38-46) in



Ladies Cropped Floral Cardigan
Crochet Pattern £2.99 **Code WLD192**
Measurements: To fit sizes 86 (91) (97) cm /
34 (36) (38) in. Actual measurements 91 (97)
(103) cm / 36 (38) (40½) in

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Don't Look Down

There's no disgrace in admitting to a common fear you share with most of the population - at least that's what I thought

I was always that girl at school. You know the one I mean - couldn't do handstands or rolls on a mat, belly-flopped going over the vaulting horse... Until one day in PE, I froze halfway up the climbing frame and clung there, going into a trance of terror. And when Miss Curtis bellowed from below, 'Get a move on, Porter! You're blocking everyone under you.' I had one word for her.

Would've been two, but I was out of breath.

That was the thing - I was kind of defiantly timid. On holidays, I stayed on the coach while the rest of the group climbed winding steps to bell towers or crossed wobbly rope bridges to scenic viewing platforms. I dwelt on the positive - I might have been scared of heights, depths, wasps, dogs off leads, PE lessons - but I wasn't afraid to fly or be confined in a lift or have injections at the dentist...

And now, as the teacher of a primary school class, I get to spend my days with small, non-judgmental people who don't mind that I've never abseiled, wing-walked, pot-holed or represented the school at county level in three different martial arts (step forward Alison Peabody, Miss Curtis' star pupil).

Pete wasn't the first boyfriend, though, who saw me as ripe for conversion to a bigger, bolder life. He just snorted when I confessed I didn't enjoy driving in unfamiliar surroundings. 'Like most women, you don't

push yourself enough, that's all. You need to drive on the M25 in the rush hour - scare yourself silly until it's second nature.'

Then he suggested our first trip together - a weekend in Bournemouth.

I felt kind of relieved - a sandy beach, botanical gardens, nice restaurants... unless he had windsurfing or parasailing in mind, I checked nervously.

He hadn't. 'Just you and me, chilling,' he smiled, looking down at me from his impressive height.

We'd met when he'd rescued me from a homicidal turnstile at a Tube station, lifting me over the metal arm after it ate my ticket and slammed into my midriff. He did sometimes tease me about my 'scaredy-catness' but he was equally open to teasing about his

'Get a move on, Porter! You're blocking everyone under you...'

macho tendencies, and they do say opposites attract.

My family approved of him, especially my brother Doug.

'He plays, doesn't he?' Doug had checked early doors, anxious to establish grounds for man-to-man bonding.

'Yeah, the nose flute,' I'd eyerolled, finally admitting that Pete was, indeed, a keen rugby and cricket player - Doug's litmus test for a 'sound bloke'.

Pete picked me up from my flat on Friday evening for our jaunt to Bournemouth. He jumped out of his car, grabbed

my case and declared, 'she's all yours.'

He meant his car, I realised. 'I'm not insured to drive it,' I panicked. It was a sporty (if not actual sports) car, with a double exhaust and yellow hub caps.

'I've put you on my insurance for the weekend,' he announced smugly. 'I trust you with my most prized possession!'

'I thought that was me!' I laughed, heart sinking. He'd blindsided me with his 'treat' and now we faced starting the weekend on a low, because I could hardly avoid saying: 'It's

meant to be a relaxing weekend, Pete. How am I supposed to relax manhandling this amount of horsepower on the motorway?'

'You just need...'

'I just need you to stop telling me what I need!'

His eager face dropped, 'If that's the way you feel...'

'It is! Can we get going?'

The guest house we'd booked online was oldy worldy, a pebble's throw from the beach. We had a lovely little room under the eaves, but Pete complained that the low

ceilings hadn't been obvious online. To be fair, anyone over five foot tall did risk concussion against the beams.

He got more annoyed when we went out to eat, and I confessed I didn't 'do' shellfish. Fiddling with his lobster bisque, he asked sarcastically, 'Is there any end to things that don't scare or daunt you?'

I drew breath to remind him about injections and confined spaces, but I sensed his attention wandering to our waitress.

We went to bed back to back, with a draughty gap between us. I turned my face into the pillow, torn between guilt at all my shortcomings and resentment that I couldn't be accepted for myself. After all, not all macho types were insensitive.

I thought of Doug, who always celebrated the differences between us, talking me up to friends as my 'arty, witty sister, can't open a jar of Branston or understand LBW, but so what? I can't teach a bunch of kids their times tables. Vive la diffs!'

I woke to the sound of a running shower and looked at my watch. Only 7am, so Pete

Continued overleaf



hadn't slept much. I wondered if he'd still be up for going to look at Mary Shelley's grave or was that too girly...

That's when I noticed a dark splodge halfway up the facing wall. It looked like someone had lobbed a handful of dark putty against the cream wallpaper. I peered, still half asleep. And then, the splodge moved.

It was a spider. A huge one. I'd never seen one so huge, outside the Discovery channel.

I'd never heard Pete scream before, either. He came out of the en suite, saw Spider-Freak, yelled like a banshee and looked around for his slippers. They were next to the bed, but to reach them, he'd have to cross the room. 'Chuck me over a slipper!' he hissed. 'I'll whack it on the wall.'

I hesitated.



'Hurry up, woman!'

Spider-Freak scuttled to the topmost beam and clung to it, defiant, rebellious, yet somehow timid, reminding me of myself back in PE, hanging on for dear life to the stupid climbing frame while awaiting the displeasure of the sadistic Miss Curtis...

Instantly, I felt guilty for categorising it as a freak. Spidey was scared of us, and scared of the hostile no man's land it had wandered into, frozen in fear before a bully about to attack.

'There's no need to be afraid, honestly,' I said soothingly to Pete rather than Spidey, since I appreciated how debilitating arachnophobia could be. 'It'll be OK. I'll deal with it.'

'Look at the size of it, woman!' 'Yes, but look at the size of us in comparison. Don't worry, I'll take care of it.'

While Pete returned to sulk in the bathroom, I sought out the landlady.

'A Cardinal spider,' she nodded, handing me a glass and a sheet of paper. 'They often come in from the rain. People are always surprised you get spiders that big in this country.'

Gingerly, I moved Spidey onto the bedroom window sash, raised it, and ushered him safely outside. I didn't like the task, particularly, but as I tried to explain to Pete later, I'm surprisingly unterrified of spiders because, you see...

'All I know is, you couldn't give a monkeys how I felt about the situation,' he accused coldly.

'I could so give a monkeys! I'm not judging you for freaking

'There's no need to be afraid, honestly,' I said soothingly to Pete

out, Pete. It was a particularly huge, hairy spider. There's no disgrace in admitting to a common fear you share with most of the population.'

That was the wrong thing to say. His face darkened. 'You've gone against everything I've suggested from the very start of this weekend, and now you're patronising me! Thanks to you, this trip's been a total disaster!'

That didn't leave much room for agreeing to differ, though I did think he'd give some of my Year Twos a run for their money in the tantrum-throwing stakes. Of course, he was really mad that I'd seen him in a vulnerable light. His ego couldn't handle it.

We returned home early, Pete officially chucking me at the petrol station where he stopped to top up. I let him do the deed, sensing that his fragile ego could not handle a mutual decision.

I felt down for a few days afterwards but, if I was honest, I also felt relieved.

A week later, welcoming the distraction, I took my class on a trip to the zoo. They went ape for the monkeys, cooed over anything with fur, and on the

coach back, asked if they could bring their own small pets in, for a class show-and-tell.

'You could bring your pet, Miss,' said freckle-faced Alfie. 'I've got a slug I rescued from drowning in my dad's home brew at the bottom of the garden!'

'Eeeyoo, yucky!' chorused some little girls nearby at the thought of a slug, which made me glance thoughtfully at Alfie. I didn't have any pets myself, but between them, Alfie and Pete had given me an idea.

On 'bring your pet to school day' a week later (excluding anything larger than a hamster), I introduced a special guest.

'This is my brother, Dr Doug Mason,' I said, ushering him forward. 'He's an entomologist. That means he studies insects and how important they are to life on the planet. In fact, he's brought along a few friends today...'

The star of Doug's show-and-tell was Erica, a Giant White Knee tarantula. 'Strictly speaking, not an insect,' Doug explained as Erica

marched up and down his forearm, the kids watching in awed fascination. 'This little lady comes from Brazil. You see a lot of critters like this on trips up the Amazon. See the white bands on her knees? Absolute beaut, isn't she? And not just a looker, she has the personality to go with it. That's what we all look for in a female!' he winked at Alfie. 'And speaking of the ladies, nothing breaks the ice like the opener, "would you like to stroke my giant white knee?" Works every time!'

'Thank you, Dr Mason,' I said hurriedly. 'Kids, any questions?'

They had loads. What did she eat? Did she bite? Did she sleep on his pillow? Could they stroke her furry white knees?

As Doug said to me afterwards, 'great idea, getting them used early doors to creepy crawlies.'

'Well, it worked for me,' I pointed out. I'd grown up with all sorts of invertebrates as housemates, thanks to my insect-mad brother. But he'd

never felt the urge to drop one down the back of my neck or hide one in my bed... and as a result, I hadn't grown up screaming at the sight of a six or eight-legged beastie.

Like I said, being a fearless, great outdoors, all-round rugged type who leaps out of planes and enjoys contact sports, doesn't have to mean you're insensitive... any more than hanging on for dear life halfway up a climbing frame made me the spineless wimp Miss Curtis had bellowed I was.

'You could make this a regular event,' mused Doug, on the walk to his car. 'Hold a "Be Kind to Creepy Crawlies" day every term. Wouldn't have to be me giving the talk,' he added, ultra-casually. 'I could give you a list of other likely candidates... if you like. All blokes, it has to be said. My neck of the professional woods is sadly lacking in female entomologists, more's the pity. You could start redressing the balance with those kids. That Joanne Peabody-Muir was fearless with Erica the spider.'

'Yeah, her mother has form.' I eyed him suspiciously. 'Likely candidates for talking to the class, right?' He knew Pete had recently bitten the dust, and subtle he wasn't.

He winked at me as if I were Alfie. 'That's up to you, sis. Don't worry, I wouldn't lumber you with a dead ringer for Pete the plonker.'

'You certainly gave a good impression of liking him!'

'I gave him the benefit of the doubt, same as you.' He opened his car door and offered me his broad, brotherly grin. 'Which I'm sensing is more than he gave you, so good riddance to him! I'll be in touch.'

As he drove off, I sensed he'd be as good as his word.

But what the heck - bring it on, I decided. It was natural to feel trepidation at something new; to cling to your climbing frame and tell yourself 'don't look down'. But then again, that meant the only way was up.

THE END

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Relaxing Brunch



ACTING COOKERY
EDITOR NICKY

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Woman's
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Mushroom Eggs Benedict

SERVES 4

- * 30g (1oz) unsalted butter
- * 2tbsp rapeseed oil
- * 500g (1lb 2oz) mixed mushrooms (chestnut and button)
- * 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- * 4 large eggs
- * 400g (14oz) spinach

- * 4 English muffins
 - * Grating of fresh nutmeg
 - * Small bunch of chives, snipped
- FOR THE HOLLANDAISE
- * 2 large egg yolks
 - * 2tsp lemon juice
 - * 2tsp white wine vinegar
 - * 120g (4¼oz) unsalted butter, melted and cooled

1 To make the hollandaise, whizz the egg yolks in a processor for 1 min. In a pan, heat the lemon juice and

white wine vinegar until steam comes off the surface. With the processor running, gradually pour in the hot lemon juice and vinegar then slowly pour in the melted butter until the sauce is thick. Season and keep warm over a pan of warm water.

2 In a large frying pan, heat the butter and oil, add the mushrooms and fry until golden. Add the garlic and cook for 2 mins. Set aside and keep warm.

3 Meanwhile, poach the eggs in a pan of barely

simmering water for 3 mins each. Microwave the spinach on high for 1 min, then drain.

4 Split and toast the muffins, top each with wilted spinach, a grating of fresh nutmeg, the cooked mushrooms and a poached egg. Spoon over the hollandaise sauce and scatter some snipped chives over the top.

PER SERVING: 656 calories, 49g fat (26g saturated), 30g carbohydrates

Shakshuka

SERVES 4

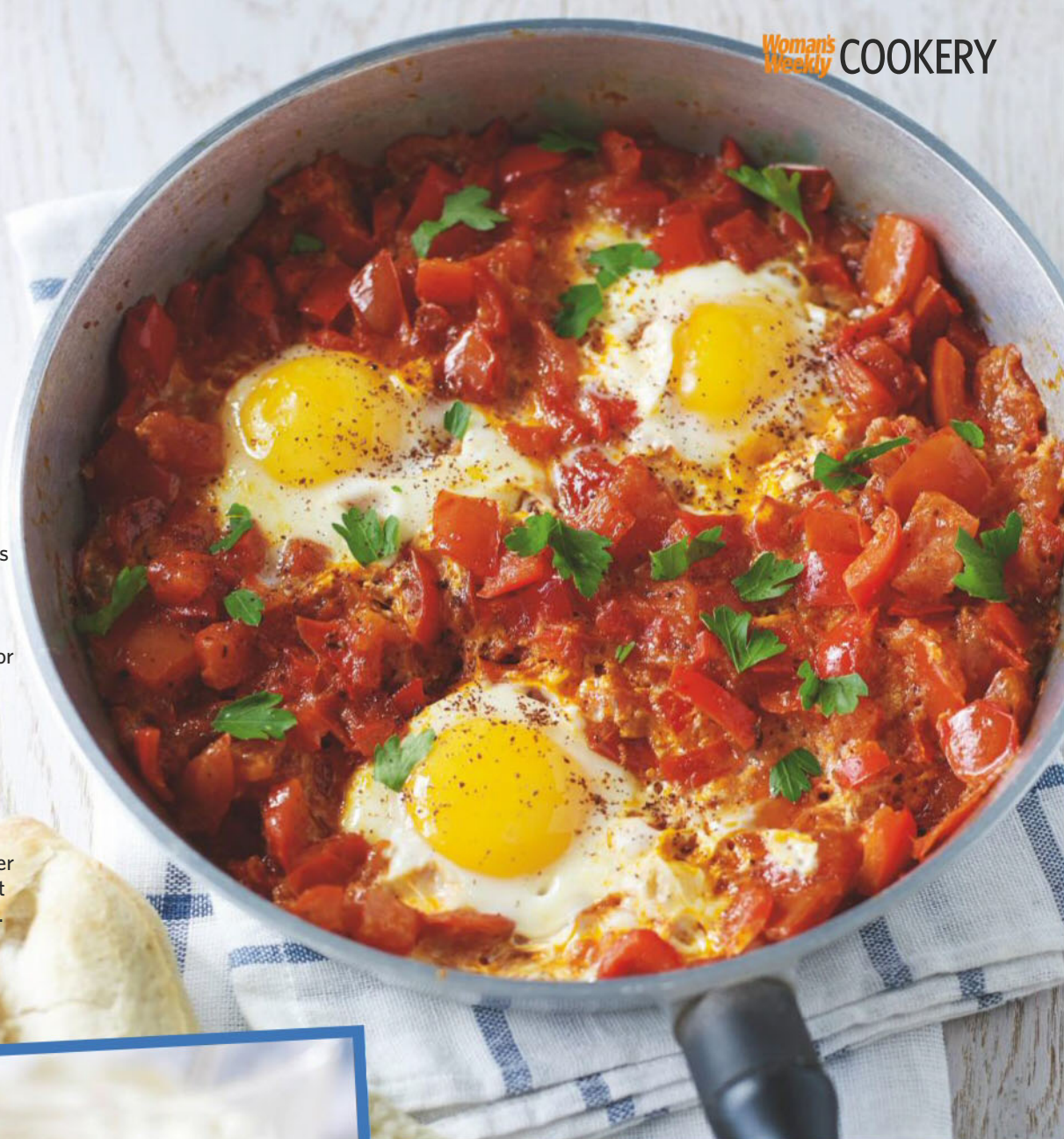
- * 2tbsp olive oil
- * 1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
- * 1tsp ground cumin
- * Pinch of ground coriander
- * 1tsp garlic paste or 1 garlic clove, crushed
- * 5 tomatoes, chopped
- * 4 eggs
- * Chopped fresh parsley and smoked paprika, to garnish

1 Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan, add the red pepper and cook for 5 mins to soften.

2 Add the ground cumin, coriander, garlic and chopped tomatoes and cook for 10 mins, stirring occasionally.

3 Make 4 dips in the tomato mixture and crack an egg into each one. Cook for 3-5 mins until the white has set and the yolk is cooked to your liking, covering the pan with a lid if you like a firm yolk. Scatter with chopped parsley and dust with smoked paprika, to serve.

PER SERVING: 340 calories, 23g fat (5g saturated), 13g carbohydrates



Ricotta And Coconut Pancakes

MAKES ABOUT 18

- * 250g (8oz) ricotta cheese
- * 2tbsp caster sugar
- * 2 large eggs, separated
- * 60g (2oz) plain flour
- * 30g (1oz) butter
- * Greek-style coconut yogurt (such as Rachel's Organic), grated lemon zest, desiccated coconut and fresh raspberries, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 160°C or Gas Mark 3 with a baking tray in it to warm. Put the ricotta, sugar and egg yolks into a bowl and beat well. Add the flour and fold

in to make a smooth batter.

2 In another bowl, whisk the egg whites until thick enough to form soft peaks, then lightly fold into the batter until just combined.

3 Melt a little butter in a large non-stick frying pan. Drop 4 or 5 separate tbsp of the batter into the pan to make small pancakes. Cook for 1-2 mins each side until slightly puffed up and golden. Transfer to the warm baking tray and keep warm while you cook more batches until all the batter is used up.

4 Serve the pancakes with Greek-style coconut yogurt, a sprinkling of lemon zest and coconut and fresh raspberries.

PER SERVING: 51 calories, 3g fat (2g saturated), 5g carbohydrates



Maple Granola With Mango and Yogurt

SERVES 16

- * 2tbsp coconut oil
- * 125ml (4fl oz) maple syrup
- * 1tsp vanilla extract
- * 250g (8oz) jumbo oats
- * 100g (3½oz) sunflower seeds
- * 100g (3½oz) sesame seeds
- * 30g (1oz) flaxseeds
- * 100g (3½oz) pecans, roughly chopped
- * 100g (3½oz) almonds, roughly chopped
- * 60g (2oz) coconut flakes
- * 100g (3½oz) each of dried cranberries and blueberries

- * Passion fruit yogurt (such as The Collective) and fresh mango, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 160°C or Gas Mark 3. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper. Gently heat the coconut oil, maple syrup and vanilla in a small pan until melted.

2 Sprinkle half the oats, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, flaxseeds, pecans and almonds over each lined baking tray. Drizzle over the maple syrup mixture and bake for 15 mins. Stir and cook for a further 5-10 mins until crisp and golden.

3 Mix the two trays of oats, seeds and nuts together then add the coconut flakes, dried cranberries and blueberries. Cool and store in an airtight jar. Serve with passion fruit yogurt and fresh mango.

PER SERVING: 238 calories, 20g fat (5g saturated), 26g carbohydrates



Maple-Baked Beans With Bacon-Wrapped Bangers

SERVES 4

- * 8 rashers dry-cured smoked streaky bacon

- * 8 Lincolnshire sausages
- * 1tbsp olive oil
- * 1 onion, chopped
- * 1tbsp malt vinegar
- * 3tbsp maple syrup
- * 100ml (3½ fl oz) chicken stock
- * 5tbsp tomato ketchup
- * 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
- * ½tsp English mustard
- * 400g can butter beans in water, drained

- * Sourdough bread, toasted, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 200°C or Gas Mark 6. Wrap a rasher of bacon around each sausage, securing with a cocktail stick. Roast in the oven for 25 mins, turning as needed.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan, add the onion and cook for 5 mins until softened.

3 Add the malt vinegar, maple syrup, stock, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce and mustard, and stir to combine.

4 Tip in the drained beans and gently warm through for 5 mins. Serve with the sausages and toasted sourdough bread.

PER SERVING: 552 calories, 39g fat (14g saturated), 19g carbohydrates

Blueberry Oat Muffins

MAKES 12

- * 100g (3½oz) self-raising white flour
- * 100g (3½oz) self-raising brown flour
- * ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
- * ½tsp baking powder
- * 90g (3oz) oats, plus 1tbsp

for sprinkling on top

- * 60g (2oz) golden caster sugar
- * 180g pack fresh blueberries
- * 2 medium eggs
- * 284ml carton soured cream
- * 6tbsp runny honey
- * 6tbsp sunflower oil
- * 12-hole muffin tin lined with paper cases

1 Heat the oven to 180°C or Gas Mark 4. Sift the white and

brown flours into a bowl, tipping in the bran left in the sieve. Add the bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, oats and sugar and stir together to mix. Sprinkle in the blueberries.

2 Beat the eggs in a large jug, then add the soured cream, honey and oil and beat together with a fork.

3 Tip the egg mixture into the dry ingredients and gently

fold together, stirring until just combined. Avoid over-mixing, a few lumps are fine.

4 Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases. Sprinkle with oats and bake for 20 mins until well-risen and pale golden. Serve warm or cold.

PER SERVING: 242 calories, 12g fat (4g saturated), 30g carbohydrates



NEXT WEEK
Tempting Traybakes

9 Great Gadgets

To help you around the house and make life a little easier



1 The Pick-Me-Up

Magimix Nespresso Vertuo, £199.99, available from all good department stores and cook shops

WHAT IT DOES The Nespresso Vertuo turns capsules into perfectly made cups of coffee at the touch of a button. There are 20 coffee flavours to choose from, along with four different cup sizes, so all tastes are catered for.

VERDICT Ideal for coffee connoisseurs who want an investment piece. For the eco-conscious, the machine has an automatic power-saving mode to switch it off.

WHY BUY? Indulge in barista-quality coffee from the comfort of home – this machine tops the lot.

2 The Stain Eraser

Bissell Stain Eraser Cordless Spot and Stain Cleaner, £99.99, available from Argos, Amazon QVC and bissell direct.co.uk

WHAT IT DOES Removes spots and stains in an instant from carpets, upholstery and even car seats. Using a special Bissell carpet shampoo, simply spray the stained area, scrub with the robust brush tip and then suck the mess up into the machine. The carpet cleaner can tackle the toughest of stains, from red wine and coffee to hard-to-budge pet stains.

WHY BUY? This cordless cleaner has a run time of 15 minutes when fully charged for four hours. Its Lithium-ion battery can retain its charge for months on end, meaning you can always have it fully charged and ready to be used.

VERDICT If you're a pet owner or have a young family, where spillages are a regular occurrence, this is for you. Compact and lightweight, it's perfect for when little accidents need an immediate clean-up.

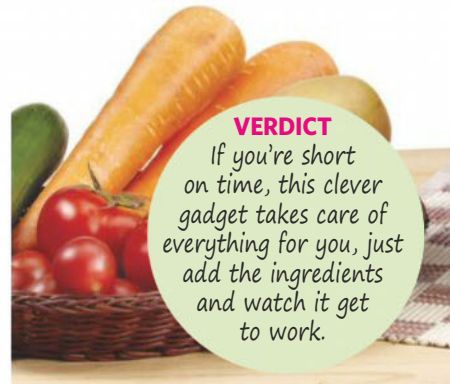


3 The All-In-One

Scott Simplissimo Chef, £159, scott-gear.co.uk, Amazon and eBay

WHAT IT DOES A multi-purpose appliance that can make chunky or smooth soup from scratch, crush ice, whizz up a sauce, steam and blend. The LED display and dial control make it easy to get cooking straight away.

WHY BUY? The automated cleaning function means you never need to dismantle the Simplissimo Chef or struggle to remove the sharp blades. If you're worried you'll only use it for soups in the winter, fear not. Just think of the cocktails you could make with its ice-crushing abilities.



VERDICT If you're short on time, this clever gadget takes care of everything for you, just add the ingredients and watch it get to work.

4 The Slow Cooker

Lakeland 1.5ltr Slow Cooker, £22.99, Lakeland

WHAT IT DOES This convenience cooker will make up your evening meal while you're out all day – simply load up with ingredients in the morning and come home to a freshly cooked meal.

WHY BUY? One of the simplest slow cookers, it does all the hard work for you with a straightforward Low or High cooking temperature and an 'Auto serving temperature' option. A glass lid enables you to see how the meal is getting along.



VERDICT The perfect size slow cooker if you live on your own or with a partner, although there are larger versions available. Its compact size makes it easy to clean and store after use.

5 The Quick Heater

Dimplex Upright Tower Ceramic Fan Heater, £70, dimplex.co.uk

WHAT IT DOES Perfect for cold and wintery days, this Dimplex fan heater will warm up any room in a flash. With two heat settings, you can choose how warm you'd like your room to be and the oscillating fan means greater distribution of heat. An ioniser helps freshen the air.

WHY BUY? Simply plug in and switch on using the controls on top to begin using the heater. There's a safety switch too which means the machine will automatically turn off to avoid overheating.

VERDICT This small machine provides a heat boost, especially on frosty mornings with a thermostat-controlled frost setting. It's easy to use and not too bulky to store during warmer months.



For Your Home



6 The Steam Machine

Breville PressXpress 2600W Steam Iron VIN338, £39.99, Argos

WHAT IT DOES The latest offering in Breville's steam iron range has a selection of new features to boost its performance, including a smooth stainless steel plate and steam shot.

WHY BUY? There are some great safety features too - an auto shut-off automatically turns off the iron when it's left unattended and a safe-store heat indicator lets you know when it's cool enough to put away.



VERDICT
If you want to update your current iron and don't want to blow your budget, this is a smart choice that has great safety features.

7 The Energy Savers

Netatmo Smart Thermostat, £149, and Radiator Valves, £59.99, both available from Maplin

WHAT IT DOES This smart thermostat helps to control your heating through an app on your mobile phone - it's compatible with

Android, Apple and Windows devices.



Combined with the smart radiator valves, it allows you to manage your heating on a room-by-room basis.

WHY BUY? Gives you instant, remote access to your heating options - great for when you're away from home.



VERDICT
Netatmo's energy-saving devices are an investment but they're the cheapest systems you can buy and you could easily recoup the cost on lower energy bills.

8 The Star Baker

Panasonic SD-ZB2502 Bread Maker, £139.99, Lakeland

WHAT IT DOES This bread maker mixes, kneads and bakes dough of all kinds. It has a special dispenser to drop the yeast into the mixture at the

optimum time to avoid a bad rise on your loaf. There is also a dried fruit dispenser for adding those flavoursome extra ingredients during the kneading process.

WHY BUY? The non-stick surface of the bread pan and mixing blade are coated in diamond particles to create an indestructible surface and a

machine that should last a long time.

In addition, there's even an option for making mouth-watering jams and compotes.

VERDICT
A wide variety of baking modes makes this model stand out from the crowd and is particularly desirable for anyone following a free-from diet. It can easily bake homemade bread to suit your needs.



9 The Sound Choice

Sonos One, £199, sonos.com, Currys and John Lewis

WHAT IT DOES A speaker that does more than just play music, it can set an alarm clock and play bedtime stories. Opt for the touch controls or activate the device with voice command to hear the crystal-clear audio.

WHY BUY? It's compatible with popular music stores and streaming services such as Spotify, Amazon, Google and Apple. Great for entertaining,

VERDICT
Music fans will fawn over this speaker that makes listening to your favourite tunes so simple and totally hands-free. It's compact and easy on the eye, too.

team the small-but-mighty speaker with other Sonos products for multi-room audio that can be activated from the Sonos One.



The Big Easy

Woman's Weekly

TESTED BY US
So They Work
For You



Knitting Editor Teresa


These two projects

couldn't be simpler! Both are knitted in super-chunky yarn which grows quickly on your needles and hooks.

Our wrap is knitted in plain garter stitch with stitches cast on and off for an easy armhole. And the crochet cowl (overleaf) only takes one ball of super-soft yarn and, on a 12mm hook, you can finish this off in an evening.



Knitted Wrap

 Easy-peasy

MEASUREMENTS

To fit bust:
81-86 (91-102) (107-112) cm/
32-34 (36-40) (42-44) in.

Actual measurements across back: 51 (56) (61) cm/20 (22) (24) in.

Length (without collar turned back): 84 (90) (96) cm/ 33 (35½) (37¾) in.

MATERIALS

16 (18) (20) 50g (50m) balls of Freedom Super Chunky (100%) in Turquoise (1110).
Pair of 10mm (No. 000) knitting needles.

TENSION

9 stitches and 17 rows, to 10 x 10cm, over garter stitch, using 10mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS

K, knit; **st(s)**, stitch(es); **gst**, garter stitch (every row k).

To make

Left front: With 10mm needles, cast on 76 (81) (87) sts for front edge. Continue in gst until left front measures 27 (30) (32) cm from beginning, ending with an even-numbered row.

Shape left armhole: Next row: K35 (37) (39), cast off next 15 (17) (19) sts, k to end.

Next row: K26 (27) (29), cast on 15 (17) (19) sts, k to end.

Back: Continue in gst until back measures 51 (56) (61) cm, ending with an odd-numbered row.

Shape right armhole: Next row: K26 (27) (29), cast off next 15 (17) (19) sts, k to end.


Next row: K25 (37) (39), cast on 15 (17) (19) sts, k to end.

Right front: Continue in gst until right front measures 27 (30) (32) cm, ending with an even-numbered row. Cast off.

*YARN IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

Crochet Cowl

(made in one piece)

 Easy-peasy

MEASUREMENTS

Circumference:

Approximately 60cm/23³/₄in.

Depth: 16cm/6¹/₄ in.

MATERIALS

2 x 100g (80m) ball of Debbie Bliss Roma (100% wool) in Ecru (01)*. Size 12.00mm crochet hook.

TENSION

8 stitches and 10 rows, to 10 x 10cm, over double crochet, using size 12.00mm crochet hook.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch, chain; **slst**, slip stitch; **dc**, double crochet; **st(s)**, stitch(es).

NOTE

Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are therefore approximate.

To make

With size 12.00 crochet hook, 47ch, slst in first ch to join.

Foundation round: 1ch (does not count as a st), 1dc in same st at base of 1ch, 1dc in each ch to end, slst in first ch - 47 sts.

Pattern round: 1ch, dc in each dc to end, slst in first ch. Repeat last round until work measures 16cm. Fasten off.

PHOTOS: CLAIRE LLOYD DAVIES. STYLIST: TERESA CONWAY. DESIGN: PENNY HILL. *YARN SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

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Key Task



Make these pretty keyrings using this simple English paper piecing technique.

Craft & Home Editor, Esme



Easy-peasy

YOU WILL NEED

- ❖ 4cm x 8cm thick fusible interfacing scraps
- ❖ 5cm x 10cm cotton fabric scraps
- ❖ Matching ribbon
- ❖ Split ring
- ❖ PVA glue
- ❖ Pins
- ❖ Sewing needle
- ❖ Matching thread

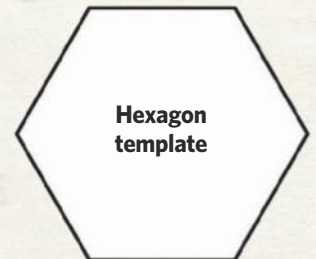
TAKES 30 minutes

1 Enlarge the hexagon template below on a photocopier so that it measures 4cm across. Cut two hexagons from the thick fusible interfacing scraps and fuse to the reverse of the fabric following the manufacturer's instructions. Cut the fabric all the way around the hexagon, leaving an extra 5mm from the interfacing's edge.

2 Fold and press the 5mm seam allowances to the reverse of both hexagons. Thread a 5cm piece of ribbon through a split ring, fold in half and glue to the interfacing side of one of the hexagons.

3 Pin the two hexagons together with all edges neatly matching, then whip-stitch by hand around the outer edges. Start between the two pieces to hide your securing knot, insert the sewing needle at a right angle as close to the folded edge as possible and draw the needle through both pieces. Insert the needle again from the same side and slightly to the left or right of the first stitch. Repeat to create a row of uniform, slanted stitches. Add extra stitches over the ribbon to make sure it's secured well in place. Remove the pins and give a final pressing before using.

Woman's Weekly
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Esme's Tip

This simple project can be made in all sorts of patterned fabrics. Why not make one for each member of your family?

WORDS: BECKY CLARKE. PHOTO: BARRY MARSDEN

NEXT WEEK
Personalised Hot
Water Bottle

Blooming Low

Look after your potted Christmas favourites this year with top tips from houseplant expert George Williams

Both orchids and poinsettias have a reputation for being a bit difficult to keep looking their best. Poinsettias seem to lose their bright red blooms in spring

Caring for your Poinsettia

Poinsettias are the fussier of the two plants. Without the right conditions and care, they will quickly lose their blooms after Christmas and can even die.

If you can find a balance of light, heat, water, and humidity, however, you should be able to retain blooms for several weeks or even months after the Christmas period.

The blooms will eventually fall, regardless of how well you look after your poinsettia. You can opt to either discard the

while orchids can wilt and die after just a few months.

But these reputations aren't wholly deserved. With the right environment and care, these beautiful plants can thrive in any home.

plant or keep it in a cool, shaded area and cut down the watering.

When spring arrives, you can trim back leggy stems, repot in fresh, fertile soil and return it to its normal bright spot. If it's a hot summer, it might be best to move your poinsettia outside to keep it cool. Give it some plant food when it starts growing again and it should 'come back to life' ready to bloom again in the winter.

Normal winter care of your poinsettia comes down to three key things: light, water, and temperature.

Light

Poinsettias like bright, indirect light. Positioning them by a window with netted or



Proper care will ensure your poinsettia lasts all year round

sheer curtains can provide the perfect balance of light. Alternatively, position them in a bright room out of direct sunlight.

In order to bloom, poinsettias need darkness at night – about 12 hours. If you can't position it so that it won't receive any light at night you can always cover it with a box to provide the darkness it needs. Just don't forget to uncover it again during the daytime!

Water

Overwatering is one of the most common mistakes made when caring for poinsettias. While it's true that they like regular watering, they also shouldn't be left sitting in water as this will lead to root rot. The best solution is to opt for well-draining potting compost, such as those containing bark. Stand the pot in a container and check that it is never left sitting in water for more than a few hours.

Poinsettias also thrive in a relatively humid environment. Placing other plants nearby can help increase humidity, as can a pebble tray – a small, shallow tray filled with pebbles and water. Alternatively, you could opt for regular misting with lukewarm water.

Temperature

Unlike most houseplants, poinsettias prefer a cooler environment. Not cold, but certainly not too warm either. Temperatures between 16-25°C should be fine.

Caring for your Orchids

Orchids are a little less fussy than poinsettias can be and when you've found the right balance, care should be fairly simple. Like the poinsettia, however, the blooms will fall at some point. This is natural and nothing to worry about. It also doesn't mean that your orchid is dead – with a little attention it will be back to its blooming best in no time.

As with all plants, proper care means finding the right

The red and green hues of the poinsettia make it a festive favourite

vely

balance of light, heat, water, and humidity.

Light

Orchids like a lot of bright, indirect light. Direct light can end up scorching the leaves, so an east- or west-facing window is ideal, or behind a sheer or net curtain. Only remove scorched leaves if the plant has plenty more, otherwise it may not be able to photosynthesise and will die.

Heat

Orchids are pretty well-suited to temperature ranges usually found in homes. In order to bloom successfully, however, orchids need cooler temperatures at night by around 5-10°C.

Water

Like the poinsettia, one of the most common mistakes people make in the care of orchids is overwatering. Orchids don't like sitting in water, which may cause root rot. Plant in well-draining soil in a pot with good drainage, sitting in a drip tray. Water when the top of the soil starts getting slightly dry and empty any water sitting in the drip tray after a few hours.

Humidity

Indoor orchids usually derive from tropical regions where the humidity is naturally high. Most homes are relatively dry, owing to things like central heating, so it is important to supply a good misting every few days. Just make sure to avoid spraying the petals of the flowers as they can get marked by water. Alternatively, use the pebble-tray method described earlier to keep humidity up.

Flowering

Orchids won't flower from the same stem twice, so once it has flowered you should trim the stem back to just above the visible joint. With any luck, this will stimulate the growth of a new stem, which will need clipping to a support.

Feeding

Fertilise your orchid once every week or two when it starts showing signs of growth, cutting back to once a month or two until it starts to mature. There is no need to fertilise the plant when it is flowering or in its dormant phase.



In the pink: give your orchid a good misting of water every few days and trim back stems once they have finished flowering



❖ Written by George Williams, CEO of SmartPlant - an app that helps plant lovers to care for their plants.

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Behind The Make-Up

In Pete's eyes, Maddy would never be good enough

Luke won't have chosen this colour,' Pete said, frowning at the pale oyster paint I was applying to the lounge walls in our son's flat. 'It'll be Maddy's doing.'

'He wouldn't have agreed if he didn't like it,' I argued. 'You've got it in for that poor girl, have done since day one.'

'I've nothing against her per se,' Pete replied. 'It's just...'

'What?' I stared at him, willing him to come clean. 'What exactly is your problem with Maddy? She's your son's fiancée and yet you continually find fault with her looks, her career...'

'I wouldn't call doing women's make-up a career,' he grumbled. 'It's not even a proper job.'

'Try telling that to her clients. Her website's full of glowing testimonials.'

Pete looked sceptical as he poured paint into a roller tray. 'It's mainly weddings though, isn't it? What does she do the rest of the time? There's no meal waiting for Luke when he gets in from work, he does his own ironing.'

'It's called an equal partnership.' Something Pete knew little about.

'And she won't be pulling her weight financially.'

'You don't know that,' I said with an exasperated sigh.

There's no reasoning with Pete at times. Once he gets an idea in his head, it's very hard to shift it. He's tetchier than ever today, his mood not helped by losing at squash last night and gaining a black eye in the process.

The speed with which the relationship developed is what bothers him most. No sooner had they met than Maddy moved into the flat.

Three months later Luke proposed, the wedding date set for early next year.

Sometimes it just happens that way. You know you've found the right one, so why hang about?

Pete wouldn't have it. He hasn't actually mentioned the word gold-digger but I'm sure that's what he's thinking. In his eyes, being an accountant with one of the country's top firms makes Luke quite a catch, and Maddy doesn't measure up.

You can't help but like her. She's lively and full of fun, the perfect foil to Luke's more serious nature. I just wish Pete would respect our son's choice and give her a chance.

'Where is Maddy, anyway?' he asked, deftly moving the roller over the ceiling. 'I thought she was meant to be here.'

'She had to go out.'

'I bet she did,' Pete snapped.

I waited. He wasn't big on apologies or admitting he was wrong...

'When there's real work to be done, she's nowhere to be seen.'

'That's unfair, Dad.' Luke stood in the doorway with two big bags of shopping. 'She wanted to do her share but something came up.'

I shot Pete a warning look before he had chance to reply. His constant sniping was creating a rift. Much more of it and Luke wouldn't want Pete at the wedding and I can't say I'd blame him.

We worked on in silence while Luke prepared the evening meal. When Maddy



She shook her head, pushing her plate away. 'I volunteer on a teenage cancer ward, doing makeovers and stuff to boost morale. Emma's chemo hasn't worked. She doesn't have long left and wanted to look glamorous, so I spent the afternoon with her. It's emotionally draining,' she said, squarely meeting his eye, 'but it helps put my own situation into perspective.'

Pete had no answer to that. I could see that he was stunned whereas Luke

arrived home shortly after we'd finished the job, Pete couldn't resist another jibe. 'You've timed that to perfection.'

'Sorry. It took longer than I expected,' she explained.

Luke appeared and gave her a big hug. 'You look shattered. How did it go?'

'Well, I think. Emma seemed happy, given the circumstances.'

Pete tutted. 'Meanwhile, the rest of us have been doing the hard graft.'

couldn't have been more proud. The look that passed between him and Maddy would have melted the hardest of hearts, a look that wasn't lost on Pete. It was all I could do not to cry.

'Did you know about this?' Pete asked while coffees were being made. 'No, but it doesn't surprise me. Maddy's that kind of girl.'

I waited. He wasn't big on apologies or admitting he was wrong.

After a while, he said, 'Do you think she could cover up my black eye?'

I nodded, patting his knee. 'She's very good with blemishes.' And she'd recognise an olive branch when she saw one.

'What did you say to Dad?' Luke asked a short time later. 'They're getting on like a house on fire in there.'

I shrugged. 'Nothing, really. I think it's finally beginning to dawn on him that you've found a lovely girl.'

'I have.' Luke grinned and kissed my cheek. 'Just like Dad did.'

THE END

© Hilary Middleton, 2017



Dr Melanie Wynne-Jones has over 30 years' experience as a GP

Dr Melanie

Preventing A Blood Clot

Early diagnosis of antiphospholipid syndrome can prevent blood clots and miscarriages

Surgery News

Missed Pill Risks

According to leading contraception expert Professor John Guillebaud, taking the combined oral contraceptive pill for 21 days followed by a seven-day break is outdated. This encourages the ovaries to prepare eggs for conception, increasing the risk of unplanned pregnancy if a pill is missed. Taking the combined pill every day could reduce this, as well as period flow, premenstrual symptoms and menstrual migraine. Speak to your doctor before making any changes, as this advice isn't licensed in the UK yet.

True Or False?

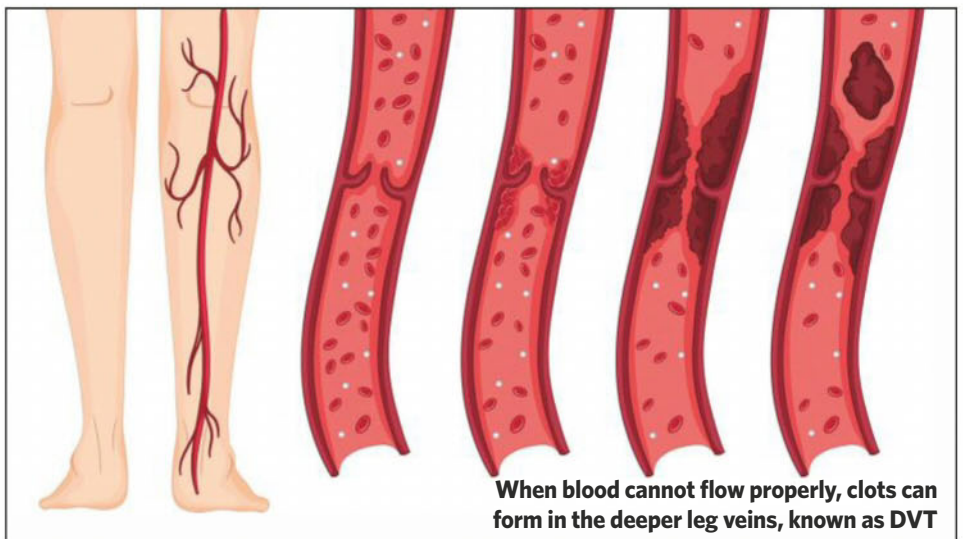
Green spaces are good for children who suffer from asthma.

True, according to US research, city parents who live nearer to parks or green spaces report fewer symptoms, especially in older children. Cleaner air, exercise and the feel-good factor may all help, (assuming they're not allergic to pollen!)

Clocking Up The Pounds

People who work night shifts may be more likely to build up tummy fat than other forms of obesity, according to Hong Kong researchers. And those doing permanent, rather than rotating night shifts, may be more at risk. Sleep disturbance and abdominal obesity have been linked to metabolic changes that can lead to conditions such as heart

disease and diabetes. Night work also makes it harder to exercise and maintain a healthy diet.



When blood cannot flow properly, clots can form in the deeper leg veins, known as DVT

Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), or Hughes syndrome, is a disease of the immune system that causes an increased risk of blood clots. It's linked to abnormal blood proteins known as aPL antibodies.

However, some people, with other immune disorders, such as lupus, or apparently unrelated conditions, have these aPL antibodies without any signs of APS.

APS affects an estimated 1% of people, although many don't realise they have

it. More common in young people and black people, it affects at least three times as many women as men.

The symptoms

APS is diagnosed if you're found to have aPL antibodies following a thrombosis (blood clot) or pregnancy problems. With hindsight, you may realise you've been having low-grade symptoms such as headaches/migraine, memory problems, dizziness, unsteadiness, joint pains and fatigue.

Blood clots can develop in arteries, veins or smaller

blood vessels anywhere in the body, and can produce a deep-vein thrombosis in the leg or arm, a heart attack or stroke, heart-valve damage, loss of sight, gradual kidney damage, or damage to the adrenal glands that produce adrenaline and steroids.

A blood clot that travels to the lung can cause sudden death. Other APS symptoms include anaemia, bone damage, and purplish-red skin/nail discoloration.

In pregnancy, APS can cause problems with placental blood supply. This can trigger recurrent miscarriages, slow baby

HELPLINES

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Dr Melanie Wynne-Jones helplines

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Heartburn 0904 470 0685 Heavy periods 0904 470 0686

Calls cost 65p per min plus your telephone company's network access charge and last approx. four

Advice from Woman's Weekly's Doctor

growth, or preterm births (before 34 weeks) linked to pre-eclampsia and poor placental function.

Catastrophic APS (CAPS), in which multiple organs and tissues become affected over a few days or weeks, is rare, but can be fatal and requires immediate hospital treatment.

The diagnosis

The earlier APS is diagnosed the better, as life-long treatment can provide protection, although it's not 100% effective.

If you develop unexplained blood clots, or the pregnancy complications mentioned above, you'll probably be offered a blood test for aPL antibodies and other causes of blood clotting, especially if you're young. This is usually repeated after three months to confirm the diagnosis. You may also need blood tests to see how various organs are working,

a Doppler scan for deep-vein thrombosis, X-rays, heart, lung or brain scans, and tests to rule out other causes of pregnancy problems.

The treatment

Your care will be supervised by a haematologist (blood specialist) or rheumatologist. You'll be treated with anticoagulant drugs to make your blood less 'sticky', (warfarin or heparin). These drugs can have side-effects and need careful monitoring.

During pregnancy, you'll be given heparin and/or aspirin, as warfarin can cause birth defects. Do tell your doctor if you're planning to get pregnant.

Any APS complications will need appropriate treatment as they arise, and good pregnancy care increases the chance of success from 20% to 70%.

Visit aps-support.org.uk or call 0300 323 9943 for more information and support.

6 Ways To Help APS

1 Avoid smoking, which narrows or blocks small blood vessels and is linked to CVD (cardiovascular disease).

2 Take regular exercise to maintain flexibility and balance, and protect against other forms of CVD.

3 Eat a healthy, balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and veg to protect against CVD, and to reduce stress on bones and joints by maintaining a healthy weight.

4 Only drink alcohol in moderation, especially if you are on medication that affects blood clotting.

5 Avoid the combined oral contraceptive pill, which can also increase blood clot risks.

6 Try relaxation techniques or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help you deal better with stress and fatigue.

Jan de Vries alternative helplines

Osteoporosis 0904 470 0812 Bladder problems 0904 470 0813

Rheumatism 0904 470 0814 Losing Dad - how will Mum cope?

0904 470 0871 Depressed 0904 470 0873 Arthritis 0904 470 0874

Q How can I avoid getting norovirus this winter?

A Norovirus is an infectious tummy bug that spreads more easily in winter, especially in closed communities such as schools, hospitals, care homes and cruise ships. It causes debilitating vomiting, tummy pain and diarrhoea for around two days, and can cause severe, even life-threatening dehydration and chemical disturbances in people who are either very old or young, or who have other conditions that make them vulnerable.

The bug is caught from virus droplets, which may contaminate hands, surfaces or food, so sufferers should stay away from other people, and particularly from hospitals and care homes. They (and

carers) should also practise good hygiene, including thorough hand-washing with soap and water, and keeping bowls, bathrooms and other surfaces clean. Sufferers shouldn't prepare food or drinks for other people until after 48 hours of complete recovery.

You can reduce your chances of catching norovirus by washing your hands regularly, but if you suspect you may have caught the virus, then follow these guidelines and drink plenty of fluids. And phone, rather than visit, your GP.



Beat the bug by washing your hands thoroughly

Q I've often wondered whether my sister, who's in her 30s, has ADHD. Could it have been missed?

A Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is often suspected/diagnosed in young boys, but it's now thought to be under-recognised in girls and young women, as they're less likely to have typical behavioural symptoms, such as over-impulsiveness, or an inability to sit still or concentrate.

Girls and women are also less likely to be referred for assessment or to be diagnosed with ADHD, and more likely to be diagnosed incorrectly with a mental health problem, learning disability or neurodevelopmental disorder. A missed diagnosis (which happens to boys, too)

can lead to psychological, social, educational and/or occupational problems, and difficulties in adult life.

Because of this, NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, is about to issue updated guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and support of children, young people and adults with possible or diagnosed ADHD. If your sister's behaviour and mental health are causing problems for her, she might benefit from a belated expert psychiatric assessment, arranged through her GP. But tread carefully - she might be alarmed by the suggestion, or already have a correct and different diagnosis.

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- ❖ Tour of Hellbrunn Palace with its beautiful gardens and 'trick fountains'
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Departures from April to October 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ Guided tour of Dubrovnik the 'Pearl of the Adriatic'
- ❖ Visit to Krka National Park and its series of stunning waterfalls and lakes
- ❖ Visit to Mostar, with its iconic bridge, once Europe's border with the Ottoman Empire
- ❖ Tour of Montenegro with visits to the UNESCO-listed towns of Perast and Kotor
- ❖ Guided tour of Split and entrance to the Emperor Diocletian's monumental palace
- ❖ Visit to medieval Trogir, one of Dalmatia's most seductive old ports
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- ❖ Seven nights' four-star hotel accommodation with breakfast and dinner
- ❖ The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout

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Health Choices

WELLBEING SOLUTIONS
For your body and mind

AMANDA OSWALD, 56, is a myofascial release practitioner from Leeds who specialises in chronic pain.



For years I worked in various desk jobs and, in my spare time, did a lot of sport, such as rugby and long-distance running. But because I wasn't very body aware, I didn't do any stretching or look after myself.

Eventually, I developed awful back pain and a slipped disc. I had surgery, which went well, but the resulting internal scar tissue caused more problems. My backache continued and the pain travelled into my hip and leg. Medically, as far as the

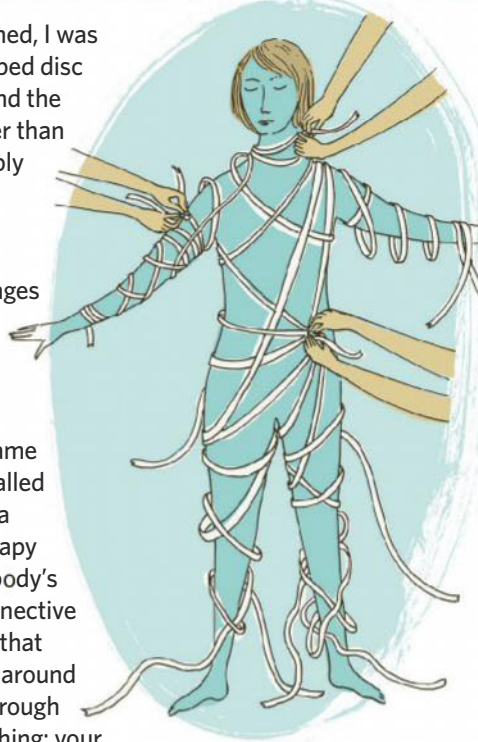
Massage helps to keep pain at bay

experts were concerned, I was fine because the slipped disc had been repaired, and the pain was niggly rather than debilitating. So I simply took painkillers and got on with life.

But then I started having regular massages to keep the pain at bay and decided to train as a massage therapist in 2005.

Once qualified, I came across a technique called myofascial release – a gentle hands-on therapy which works on the body's fascia – the main connective tissue that wraps around and through everything: your

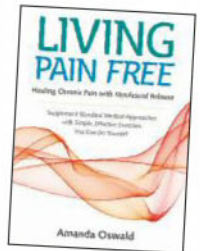
cells, muscles, bones, blood vessels and nerves. The technique helped lessen my pain, so I retrained and



headaches and migraines, and shoulder, back and jaw pain. Sessions are 55 minutes and cost from £55, and I teach clients self-help techniques (stretching and breathing exercises and self-massage), so they can help themselves at home. They usually see an improvement after four to six sessions.

I follow my own advice and have eradicated my back pain with just 20 minutes a day of stretches, exercises and self-massage.

*** Amanda's book, *Living Pain Free: Healing Chronic Pain with Myofascial Release* (£14.99, Lotus Publishing) is available in bookshops and on Amazon. Her website is paincareclinic.co.uk**



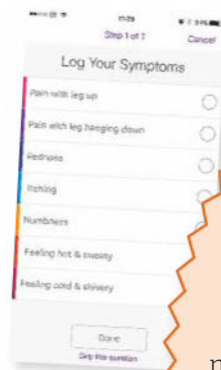
WHAT'S THIS?



The Box Appetit Thermo Pot (around £30 from black-blum.com or amazon.co.uk) is the perfect way to keep you going on a winter walk. Fill it with warming, re-energising soup or broth and it will keep warm for up to six hours. The magnetic ladle spoon sticks to the pot's side and the screw cork top ensures no leaks. Now there's no reason not to get out there and get active...

New App

If you're one of the 500,000 people in the UK who suffer from leg ulcers, the Leg Ulcer Charity (legulcercharity.org) has launched a free mobile app to help sufferers. Called **Medopad**, (available on App Store), it allows patients to track the progress and treatment of leg ulcers, and share information with their doctor.



3 Health-Boosting House Plants

ALOE VERA: named by US space agency NASA as one of the best plants for air purification, the leaf gel is also great applied to minor burns.
ARECA PALM: releases moisture into the air, which helps if you have a cold.
ENGLISH IVY: American researchers have discovered that this plant is great for removing mould spores from indoor air.



NEWS FLASH

Regular yoga may help to prevent weight gain, according to research from the Journal of Physical Activity and Health. Although the activity isn't a huge energy burner, it's thought that it makes people more body aware and therefore better at managing stress and looking after themselves. And that means you're less likely to overeat.



Woman's Weekly Travel Offers

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- ❖ Relax in a spacious cabin or suite whilst admiring the spectacular views
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Selected departures from May to October 2018. Price includes:

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- ❖ Seven guided tours of Budapest, Vienna, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Bratislava, Koblenz and Würzburg
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- ❖ Fourteen nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite, all with river views
- ❖ All meals on board from dinner on your day of arrival to breakfast on your day of departure, including welcome cocktails, a welcome dinner and the Captain's Dinner
- ❖ Live classical quartet recital on board



Bruges, Medieval Flanders, Amsterdam & the Dutch Bulbfields

Selected departures in April 2018. Price includes:

- ❖ Tour of Amsterdam, one of the world's most unique cities
- ❖ Walking tour of Bruges, one of Europe's most perfectly preserved medieval towns
- ❖ Tour of Antwerp, the city of Rubens and the 'Flemish Masters'
- ❖ Walking tour of Ghent, the 14th century's largest city in Western Europe
- ❖ Visits to Arnhem, the Keukenhof Gardens, Ypres and the First World War Battlefields
- ❖ Cruise along the Zuiderzee
- ❖ Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite, all with river view



Rhine Cruise to Switzerland

Selected departures from April to October 2018. Price includes:

- ❖ The chance to experience medieval Koblenz
- ❖ Visit to the pretty, romantic town of Rudesheim - centre of the Rhineland wine trade
- ❖ Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge
- ❖ An evening in Speyer, dominated by the imposing cathedral
- ❖ Guided tour of Strasbourg, with its wealth of sights
- ❖ Visit to the old walled town of Breisach
- ❖ Tour of the beautiful Black Forest and lakeside town of Titisee
- ❖ Tour of some of the finest Swiss Alpine scenery, seeing the Jungfrau and the Eiger, Interlaken and the stunning lakeside town of Lucerne



The Blue Danube

Vienna, Budapest & Salzburg

Selected departures from April to October 2018. Price includes:

- ❖ Guided tour of Vienna and tour of Budapest
- ❖ Live classical quartet recital on board
- ❖ Visit to baroque Bratislava, capital of Slovakia
- ❖ Cruise through the scenic Wachau, Austria's premier wine region
- ❖ Visit to Melk Abbey, central Europe's most spectacular baroque monastery
- ❖ Visit to medieval Durnstein, where Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned
- ❖ Tour of Salzburg, birthplace of Mozart and one of Austria's most beautiful cities
- ❖ Explore the amazing basilica at Esztergom, Hungary's oldest cathedral

To book, go online at travel.womensweekly.co.uk
or call 01283 742396 quoting code WWE



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Here To Help

Coach, counsellor and writer **Keren Smedley** has worked for more than 20 years helping people to make positive changes to their lives

Time to make amends

Q I have a friend who's always late. We make arrangements and she turns up half an hour late. I've got used to this and now turn up late myself. Last time we met, she turned up on time and was furious with me for being late. I tried to explain why but she just wouldn't listen and finally flounced out of the cafe. We haven't spoken since. We're really good old friends so it seems such a pity.

Jenny, Glasgow

A It is and, unless you want it to stay just as it is, one of you is going to have to do something about it. You can wait for her to contact you which may never happen or suggest you meet up and discuss this. Check that she wants to resolve this and that she's now a bit calmer. If she isn't yet ready to improve things or is still feeling angry, it's best to give her time. It's hard to have a rational conversation with someone who's cross. My hunch is she'll be missing you and be delighted you've called. Make sure you come to some agreement regarding time so you don't get into this muddle again. Maybe agree 10 minutes late is the maximum.

Our daughter is dating a much older man

Q My daughter is going out with a man who is three years younger than her father and me. He seems very nice but he's too old. I've told her what we think and pointed out it might be all right now but it won't be when he's an old man. But she's adamant. After a recent row, she said that, if we ever discuss it again, she would stop seeing us. Can we really just sit back and watch this happen?

Name and address withheld

❖ Keren welcomes your letters, emails and texts, but she cannot reply to individual cases and will select correspondence at random for publication.

Should my son stay here or go?

Dear Keren

My son has been offered an amazing opportunity to work in Beijing for three years. It's a promotion and he'll be able to experience living in another environment with a very different culture. He went straight from school to university and then into a job so has seen very little of the world. He wants to go and, although I'd miss him, I think it would be good for him. The problem is he's fallen in love and plans to marry in six months. They're both 37 and keen to start a family. She doesn't want to go. She says she wants to be in England near her family when she has a child. Of course, I understand what she's saying and it's reasonable. What I don't know is whether he'll end up resenting her because she's stopped him from having the experience of a lifetime. I don't know what to say to him.

Josie, Brighton

Ask him how he sees his future



It's hard when two great things come along at once and it looks like you can't have both so I understand his dilemma. I think it's really important that you don't try to influence him in any way as he will end up resenting you. What you can do is ask some questions. One that I'd suggest is to ask him to imagine himself in Beijing six months into his secondment. Might he be resenting his firm for the loss of his partner and the opportunity to have children with her? If the answer is yes, then he really needs to consider which loss would be the least painful in the long term. A way to do this is to picture himself at 60 and then look at both scenarios: one where he'd had the amazing experience of travelling and living abroad and the other where

he'd stayed home with now grown-up children and his wife. Ask him which is the more appealing.

The most important thing is that he and his fiancée talk about this and agree together the best way forward. Learning to compromise in a way that feels good for both of them is the bedrock for a good relationship.

A You haven't just sat by: you've made your views known but that doesn't mean your daughter has to accept them. She's an adult and has listened to you and made her own decision. She has also asked you to leave her to manage her own life. It may not be what you would choose but you can either fall out with her or support her in her

decision. She needs to know that her parents are there for her even if they don't like the choices that she's making and will continue to be there if things were to go wrong.

Email WomansWeeklyPostbag@timeinc.com **Write to** Here To Help, *Woman's Weekly*, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP **Visit** Keren's site at experiencematters.org.uk

KEREN'S HELPLINES

Worrying: manage your fears **0904 470 0716**
Concerned about memory loss? **0904 470 0717**
When your children leave home **0904 470 0831**

How to cope with ageing parents **0904 470 0719**
Coming to terms with loss and grief **0904 470 0804**
How to banish your empty feelings **0904 470 0802**

1 Huelva, Costa de la Luz, Spain

Want to holiday like the Spanish? Head to The Costa de la Luz, referred to by the Spanish as the Secret Coast. But the secret is getting out, with Brits cottoning onto the unspoilt, hidden charms of this western corner of Andalucía. It has about 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, so is perfect if you're a sun chaser. A mixture of historic towns, relaxed resorts, excellent seafood restaurants and long, wild stretches of sand make it a great destination. The Huelva area is also on the edge of an impressive wetland reserve. Christopher Columbus stayed at the

monastery in La Rábida and you can see replicas of his three ships in a dock which recreates the day when they set sail on a voyage that discovered the Indies. Some of the many resorts along the coast to consider include Islantilla, Conil and Punta Umbría near Huelva. **✦ Book a B&B in May from £243 per person for a week via travelsupermarket.com.**



Visit the monuments to Columbus and his voyages



2 Orlando, Florida

Although there's been a 'Trump slump' in holiday bookings to the USA since his election win, incredible prices to the sunshine state are putting it back on people's holiday searches. The best time to go is November to June, when temperatures are more comfortable and it's less likely to rain. Attractions include the theme parks, Kennedy Space Center and the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens. It's also worth experiencing a basketball game. **✦ If you want to take the grandkids, why not head to Orlando for May half-term 2018 with package prices for a week, via travelsupermarket.com, coming up for as little as £364 each from Leeds Bradford, Manchester or Gatwick. If you prefer to go without children, prices for a week in March and April start from just £372 per person.**



6 NEW Travel H

Wander the pretty streets



Lefkas/Lefkada, Greece

4 Laid-back Lefkas (or Lefkada) may not be as famous as some of its bigger Greek island rivals, but it offers something just as magical. It's a rising destination with 92% more Brits looking to go there in



Idyllic Porto Katsiki Beach

the past year. The island offers peace and tranquillity with many unspoilt villages; head inland to Karya or to Agios Nikitas on the north-west coast, from where you can also hop on a little ferry around the headland to beautiful Milos beach. Lefkada Town itself has interesting shops and really good tavernas and chilled-out bars. **✦ 3* self-catering for a week in May from as little as £174 per person from Stansted or Gatwick, including flights, searching via travelsupermarket.com.**

Looking for a new holiday destination? Here are six that are getting travel insiders excited



Rovinj fishing port is Istria's star attraction



Kennedy Space Center

See the Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World

3 Kusadasi, Izmir, Turkey

Destinations like Marmaris and Bodrum on Turkey's south coast are where British holidaymakers tend to head. But nipping at their heels is Kusadasi on the west coast with a 175% increase in Brits looking to go there in the last year. Hire a car and visit the ancient city of Ephesus, the World Heritage-listed stalactites and pools at Pamukkale and the Roman spa city of Hierapolis. Also worth checking out is

the Byzantine castle on Pigeon Island, accessible via a causeway from Kusadasi and a great place to take in a sunset.

❖ Turkey offers some of the best holiday prices for Brits and the money-saving trick is to go at the start of the main season, with a week in May from £176 B&B or £213 all-inclusive per person from travelsupermarket.com.



Ancient Ephesus



The pools at Pamukkale

Hot Spots For 2018

Istrian Riviera, Croatia

5 You may have heard of the Dubrovnik Riviera. But the Istrian peninsula in northwest Croatia is known as the 'Tuscany of the Balkans' for its rolling hills and emerald-clear waters. It's also steadily featuring on Brits' holiday maps as an ideal destination for exploring, as well as hitting the beach. Just some of the adventurous options include snorkelling, cycling, exploring caves, go-karting, zip-lining or visiting one of the many aquariums or water parks. If you want to take the kids or grandkids, you'll nearly always find the best prices at the beginning or end of the school holidays.

❖ Prices for a week via travelsupermarket.com are from £258 each for two adults and two children, departing 19 August from Stansted or Gatwick. If you want to go without children, prices start in May from as little as £124 each.



Dine at a restaurant in the Jewish Quarter

6 Kraków, Poland

Poland is firmly on the city-break map due to its low prices and wealth of historical sites, as well as being a rising foodie destination. Head for Kraków in 2018, which is less crowded if you avoid the summer months. Attractions include 16th-century Wawel Royal Castle with its ornate architecture and incredible works of art. The Old Jewish Quarter,

where Steven Spielberg shot *Schindler's List*, is now a hip area full of bars and restaurants, while close to the city, you can tour the fascinating Wieliczka Salt Mine and its magnificent underground cathedral. ❖ Searching via travelsupermarket.com, three-night packages in March 2018, with flights included, start from less than £100 per person.



Jump on a tram to see the city

Woman's Weekly Travel Offers

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13 days
from
£3,449pp

Japan - Land of the Rising Sun

Departures from March to November 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ See the sights of Tokyo, including the Meiji shrine, Omotesando Street, trend-setting Harajuku and Akihabara electric town
- ❖ Enjoy views of Mount Fuji from Lake Kawaguchi and the resort of Hakone
- ❖ Travel at 189mph on a high-speed bullet train
- ❖ Reflect on the horrors of war at Hiroshima's Peace Park and museum
- ❖ Guided tour of Kyoto
- ❖ Guided tour of Nara
- ❖ Return flights from the UK with premium-economy upgrades available at a supplement
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- ❖ The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout



13 days
from
£1,729pp

Sri Lanka

Departures from January to November 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ Visit the Buddhist monastery of Dambulla and its UNESCO-listed cave temples
- ❖ Guided tour of the 5th-century Royal Palace and Citadel at Sigiriya Rock
- ❖ Visit Kandy and see the Temple of the Tooth, plus visit the Royal Botanical Gardens
- ❖ Stay in the colonial hill-station of Nuwara Eliya
- ❖ Visit the Elephant Transit Home at Udawalawe National Park
- ❖ Enjoy a 4x4 safari in Yala National Park, famed for its leopards and elephant herds
- ❖ Spend three nights relaxing on one of Sri Lanka's idyllic tropical beaches
- ❖ Return flights from the UK, plus all hotel transfers
- ❖ Hand-picked three and four-star accommodation, including all local taxes, with daily breakfast and dinner included
- ❖ The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout
- ❖ Departures exclusively for solo travellers also available



16 days
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£2,099pp

South Africa

Departures from January to November 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ Tour the Zulu War battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift with a specialist guide
- ❖ Full-day guided safari in the Kruger National Park
- ❖ Stay in the heart of the gorgeous Western Cape's Winelands, enjoying a cellar tour and tasting at a 300-year-old wine estate
- ❖ Stay three nights in Cape Town, one of the world's most naturally beautiful cities
- ❖ Explore Cape of Good Hope and Cape Town's Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
- ❖ Visit Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum
- ❖ Gaze at the awe-inspiring Blyde River canyon, the third largest in the world
- ❖ Visit Hermanus for the world's finest on-shore whale watching, dependent on season
- ❖ Take an internal flight to the stunning Garden Route
- ❖ Return flights from a selection of regional airports with no additional supplement
- ❖ Stay in hand-picked four-star and three-star hotels with daily breakfast, two lunches and three dinners
- ❖ The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout
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15 days
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£2,069pp

California & the Golden West

Departures from March to September 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ Sightseeing tour of Los Angeles, the City of Angels, with its many famous highlights including Beverly Hills, the Hollywood Walk of Fame and the Sunset Strip
- ❖ Tour of sunny San Diego, the classic southern California city
- ❖ Experience the stunning beauty of the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion and Yosemite National Parks
- ❖ Visit timeless Monument Valley, a masterpiece of ancient erosion
- ❖ Drive through the iconic Mojave Desert
- ❖ Visit glitzy Las Vegas, the entertainment capital of the world with eye-popping architecture
- ❖ Guided tour of cosmopolitan San Francisco, dominated by the instantly recognisable Golden Gate Bridge
- ❖ Return flights from the UK, plus all hotel transfers. Premium economy flight upgrades available at a supplement
- ❖ Hand-picked accommodation rated three to four stars, including all local taxes
- ❖ The services of our experienced and insightful tour manager throughout

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or call 01283 742396 quoting code WWE

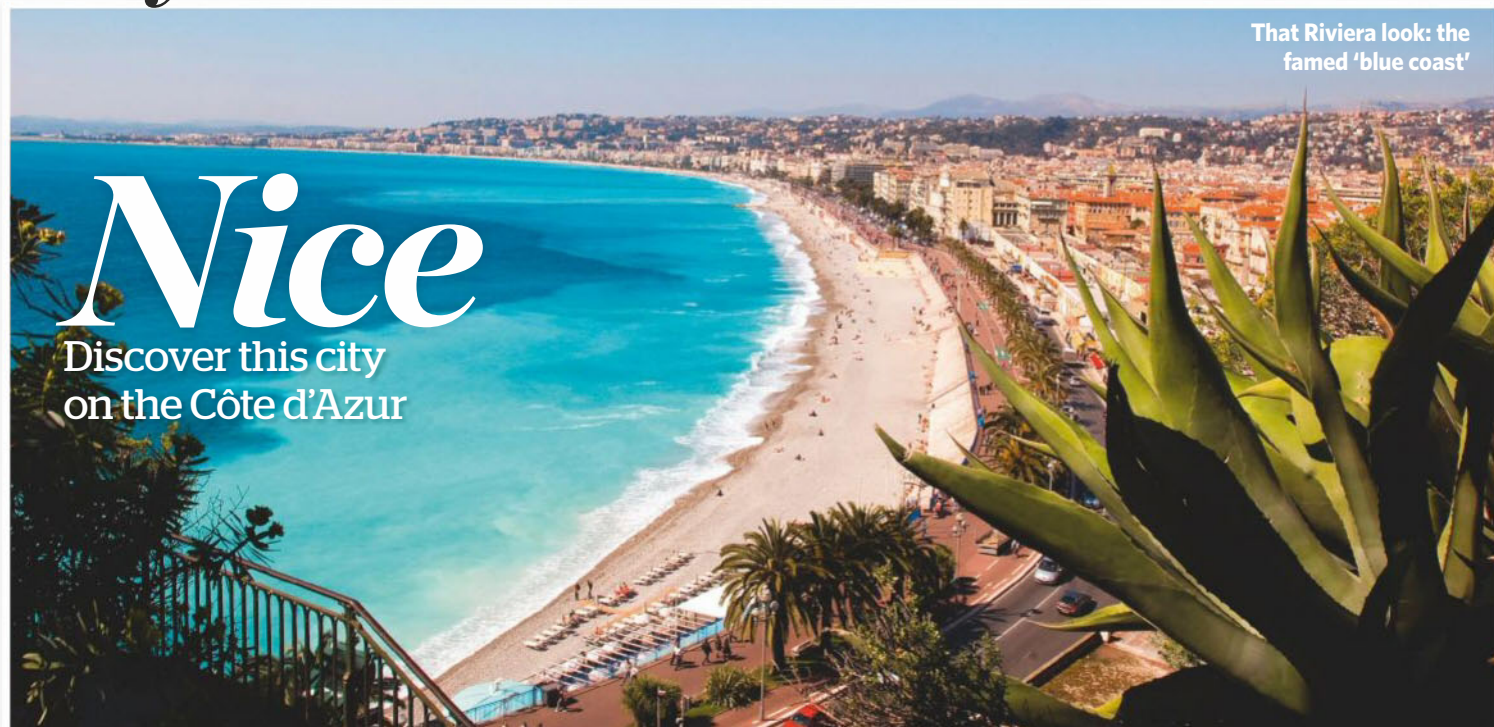


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That Riviera look: the famed 'blue coast'

Nice

Discover this city on the Côte d'Azur



It was watching TV drama *Riviera* that made me want to visit Nice. The French city has been a holiday and health resort since the 18th century, but it was the glamorous locations in the recent hit thriller series that drew me to the Côte d'Azur, which boasts 330 days of sunshine a year.

Queen Victoria, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse were all mesmerised by the sapphire blue sea and *Great Gatsby* novelist F Scott Fitzgerald wrote in 1926, 'On my beloved Riviera I'm happier than I've been for years.'

These days, Sir Elton John has a home in the hills and it's not unusual to see Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich's super-yacht moored just offshore.

What to do

I set out on foot for the Place Masséna, Nice's chequered main square, lined with palm trees and pines and dominated by the naked statue of Apollo. If you visit in February, it's the best spot to catch the annual carnival parade and during the hot months, children squeal as they play in the pavement fountain.

After popping into the Office De Tourisme for a map, I headed along Ponchettes Beach on the Promenade des Anglais to Castle Hill, a huge limestone rock topped by the Tour Bellanda. The



Hotel Ellington



Socca good: try this Nice speciality



Explore the pretty Old Town market

More Online
Find lots more destination ideas at womansweekly.com/travel

93-metre climb to the observation terrace puffed me out but the panoramic view of The Bay of Angels from the top was worth it.

Later, at the Cours Saleya market in Nice's Old Town, I

bought handmade fragrant soaps - lemon, orange and melon - at The Marché aux Fleurs (Tuesday to Sunday) and explored the surrounding winding narrow

lanes. The pastel-hued facades, dotted with green shutters, are home to a mix of bustling cafes and chic ateliers, jewellers and art galleries.

Where to stay

Hotel Ellington, on the Boulevard Dubouchage, is comfortable and central, with rooms from £65. I relaxed in the jazz-themed Duke Bar & Lounge where it's happy hour from 5pm to 8pm.

What to eat

For elevenses, I couldn't resist the aroma of fried Socca, the local chickpea flour pancake. It makes the perfect snack, sprinkled with pepper and devoured piping hot.

A perfect spot to dine in the Old Town area is Le Gaglio. I chose an outside table for a relaxed lunch of 'poivrons grillés' (grilled peppers).

Travel details

I found the best flight deals with skycanner.net and travelled with BA. As an excursion, I rode on The Lignes d'Azur 100 bus east (the Nice-Monaco-Menton route) along the scenic cliff-hugging coastal Basse Corniche coastal road.

WORDS: BEVERLEY WATTS. PHOTOS: ALAMY. RIVIERA: SEASON ONE IS OUT ON DIGITAL DOWNLOAD, BLU-RAY & DVD

HEALTH | "I believe Aerosure has considerably helped my breathing. I have COPD & with correct use my life has become more manageable"

reevoo Georgia, 38 out of 10 Coatbridge

Huffing & puffing or feeling out of breath

when doing every day tasks?

HOW DOES IT WORK?



Aerosure Medic works by spinning a valve inside the device at high speed to rapidly open and close the flow of air into and out of your lungs.

As you breathe through the mouthpiece the oscillating valve creates a resistance, vibrating the chest wall to work the lungs.

Aerosure has two settings which work on different frequencies. The first mode works at 15Hz. This aims to replicate the natural beat frequency of cilia in the lungs. Cilia are microscopic, hair-like structures that line the breathing tubes. The second mode, or 'Breathe Easier' mode, works at the faster frequency of 25Hz, which stimulates the respiratory muscles.

93% of people who had COPD, saw a positive benefit

reevoo Georgia, 38 out of 41 people

Everyone finds themselves huffing and puffing or feeling out of breath at some point. This might be after physical activity or exertion like walking up a steep hill or a flight of stairs. Being out of breath can also be caused by underlying respiratory conditions such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) but also due to cold weather or smoking.

Whether being out of breath comes out of the blue or is there more often it can be debilitating and restricting. Breathe easier with the UK's only Dual-Function respiratory device.

Aerosure is drug-free, and has been designed and scientifically-tested to relieve the symptoms of breathlessness in people with COPD.



AS SEEN ON TV

See how Aerosure Medic has helped people like you*:



"I feel like I am not huffing or puffing when I walk the dog, even the dog is pleased." Mr. A.J. Laidlaw, Elgin



"I suffer with COPD, when I first saw the ad for Aerosure I was very unsure, however in the end I decided to take a chance and purchase it. I bless the day I did, the Aerosure has made such a huge change in me as I feel I can get around better, walk easier and further. It is a godsend to me and I would recommend it to anyone suffering with shortness of breath etc"

Hear more about Christine's story on our website



"I have COPD and used to use my inhalers when I started wheezing about 3am in the morning, since using Aerosure twice a day I feel like I can sleep better. It took about 3 weeks of use before I felt the benefits. Best money I have ever spent and would highly recommend it." Roy, Sheffield

MEDICAL SCIENCE SUPPORTS RESPIRATORY TECHNOLOGY

AEROSURE is based on two well-established systems - **inspiratory muscle training (IMT)**[†] effects and **oscillatory positive expiratory pressure (OPEP)**[†].

IMT: This technique is designed to directly affect the functioning of the respiratory muscles which are responsive to training. IMT can benefit people with COPD and other conditions involving respiratory muscle weakness. IMT has demonstrated a number of benefits in a wide range of studies, both in healthy subjects and in people with clinical conditions. **Often reported benefits are:**

- ✓ Increased inspiratory muscle strength
- ✓ Increased expiratory muscle strength
- ✓ Reduced breathlessness

OPEP: Designed to interrupt the expiratory airflow, which results in the airways vibrating. Vibration stimulations applied to the inspiratory system have been shown to:

- ✓ Reduce breathlessness in people with COPD

SCIENTIFICALLY-TESTED TO REDUCE BREATHLESSNESS**

In a recent clinical study in 23 people with COPD at University Hospitals of Leicester (NHS trust), daily use of Aerosure over an 8 week period resulted in a significant improvement in breathlessness.

IS AEROSURE FOR YOU?

AEROSURE is a CE marked medical device intended to reduce breathlessness in patients with **COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)**.

It is also suitable for use in the following patient groups:

- Asthma
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Emphysema
- Bronchiectasis

Speak to your healthcare professional to see how Aerosure Medic could help you.

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This Week

CHRIS PARTRIDGE

is a digital expert and writer. He'll answer your questions on anything from computers to mobiles.



Health And Well-Being Technology

Q I would like to get fitter and lose a bit of weight. How can technology help?

The latest smartwatches are now quite sophisticated, with health monitors that track your activity levels and heart rate to help you live a healthier life.

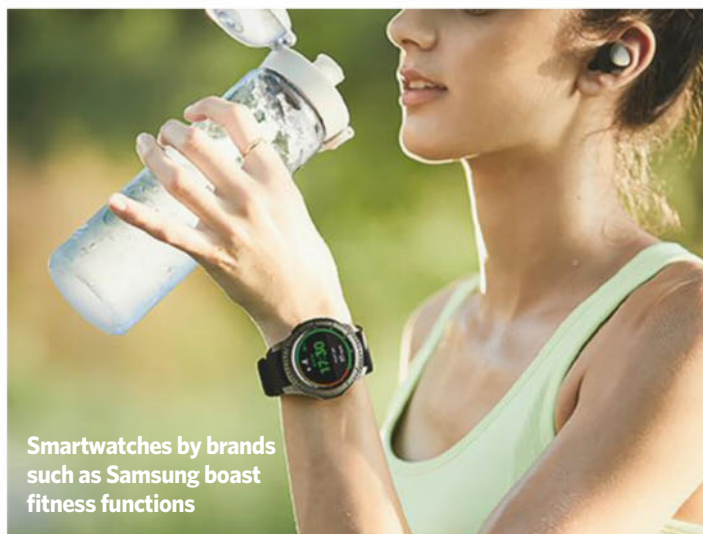
Q But will I use it? I've already got a fitness band in the drawer I never use.

That is very common – research shows about half of fitness bands are abandoned after a few months because people get bored with being nagged to get up and walk around. Some can't even tell the time, so you have to wear two things on your wrist.

Smartwatches, however, now offer much more. As well as health features, they can show texts and notify you when emails come in or when your Facebook feed has been updated. With some, you can even make contactless payments with a flick of your wrist. But their main claim is that they can give you more information about your health and wellbeing than a simple fitness band.

Q How do they take all these measurements?

As with fitness bands, activity is tracked by an accelerometer that detects hand movements and analyses them to work out how many steps you are taking.

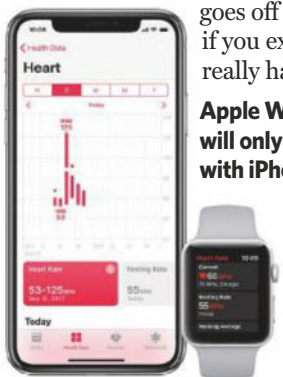


Smartwatches by brands such as Samsung boast fitness functions

A barometer tracks you going upstairs. New smartwatches also have satellite positioning (GPS), which means they can detect overall movement to track sports such as cycling and rowing. They are also usually waterproof, so you can add swimming to the mix.

Smartwatches also have heart rate monitors that shine a light through the skin to 'see' blood vessels below and measure beats due to the pulse (as opposed to chest straps that measure the heart's electrical activity), although the accuracy goes off a bit if you exercise really hard.

Apple Watches will only work with iPhones



Q What health factors can smartwatches monitor?

The main one is exercise. General activity is monitored well and running is accurately recorded. Sports such as swimming require you to set the watch specially, so whole sessions can go unrecorded if you forget to press a button.

In common with fitness bands, smartwatches claim to give an indication of calories burned, but research shows these estimates are unreliable. Another feature is calorie counting, but you have to log the weight of every item and life is too short for most of us.

Both smartwatches and fitness bands monitor sleep, detecting periods of rapid eye movement (REM) to indicate deep sleep. Unfortunately, the claimed 'sleep quality' metrics are not terribly accurate – and most of us will remove the watch overnight to charge it.

Q I use a smartphone app to track my runs. Will I need to learn a new system if I buy a smartwatch?

Probably not, although it is worth checking before you buy. Most smartwatches can supply data to the most popular fitness and sports apps.

One of the pioneers of the activity monitor, Fitbit, has just launched its own smartwatch, Ionic, and partnered with sports app Strava to ensure data from the watch is supplied to the app and information created by the app is displayed on the watch screen. Ionic packs the usual GPS, activity and heart rate monitors into a watch that connects to any smartphone (£299.99 at fitbit.com).



Fitbit's new Ionic smartwatch

Q Does it matter which operating system my phone uses?

Apple smartwatches pair only with iPhones, which is a shame as Apple is focusing heavily on health with its Watch Series 3 (from £329 at apple.com/uk).

Smartwatches using Google's Android Wear system pair with most phones – even iPhones.

Samsung uses its own system, Tizen, in its new Gear S3 (£349 at samsung.com/uk).

A cheaper option may be to buy a fitness band with watch functions, such as Garmin's Vivosport (£169.99 at buy.garmin.com).

Do You Have A Question?

❖ Write to: Expert Q&A, *Woman's Weekly*, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP or email WomansWeeklyPostbag@timeinc.com
Our experts welcome your letters but they cannot reply to individual questions and will select questions for publication only.

NEXT WEEK
Stoves

The Story So Far....

American septuagenarian, **Meredith**, is flying home to New York for the first time in over 20 years. It's New Year's Eve, and the plane is half-empty. Finding herself sitting beside a beautiful but silent young woman, Meredith's head is full of memories: of her life in the 60s and 70s as a Pan Am stewardess, and of the acrimony between herself and her estranged, dying sister, **Lainey**. The beautiful young woman is called Jenna, a British model who is returning to the US to spend the New Year with her husband, **Blake**, and his children. She's consumed with grief having buried her mother, and totally overcome by her fear of flying. All she wants to do is bury her head and get through the flight. But Meredith engages her in an emotional conversation that culminates in the revelation that 50 years earlier, coerced by her sister, Meredith gave away her baby.

The story continues

Meredith cleared her throat, ran a wrinkled finger around the edge of the airline table in front of her and told her story to Jenna. Tuesday 13 February, 1968 had been a bitterly cold day with the kind of thin, frost-filled air that burned the back of the throat. It was three weeks too early, but as the first sharp twist of pain doubled her over, Meredith knew her baby was coming. There wasn't a lot of time for panic or fear, not then at least. Lainey, her sister, had temporarily moved in with her, running errands and helping to hide the enormous stomach that had grown and grown. It had felt like help then. Or had it? There was a fine line between that and bullying, imposing your will, filling someone's head with half-truths. Had she

been naive? Or had a part of her, no matter how deeply she'd attempted to bury it since, wanted to be led by Lainey down a path of desertion and liberty? It wasn't as though it had been easy, the two of them camping out on the hard couch that doubled as a bed in the tiny, less-than-one-room apartment Meredith rented in Manhattan. But on that cold morning whatever she had been thinking, and secretly wanting, came to an abrupt end. There was just a minute to brush her hair, pack an overnight bag and pull on her coat and gloves before Lainey hooted the car horn, and it was time to go. The apartment never looked the same to Meredith again. It was never home again; never filled with laughter or the mewl of a baby; it was never warm or safe. Within two months, she'd packed up and moved out. Within another three, she was flying the world. On a pedestal. In denial. Free.

Reinvented.
Frozen.

Meredith pushed herself back into the uncomfortable seat of the jumbo and exhaled slowly. She had never told the tale of Edward's birth quite like this before, not even to herself. She had hidden the truth from so many people that the words felt completely foreign on her lips. It had become second nature to lie: to Pan Am, of course, as there was no way they would have taken her if they'd known she was a mother; to her parents; her few

friends and to the man she eventually married, and divorced eight years later. But it was all true. Painfully so. Until now, she had never felt the need to tell the complete truth. With Jenna though, it was different.

'Where did you go?'

Meredith wiped the tears from her cheeks with her fingertips. 'About 45 minutes north of the city, to a place called New Rochelle.'

Beside her, she felt Jenna nod.

'Lainey arranged it all. There was a maternity home there. I wasn't due for a few more weeks but they took me anyway. I guess I was lucky. They were kind. Well, as kind as they could be. No-one belittled me.

It was all very clean and straightforward. I know that wasn't always the case, so I really was luckier than most.' The weight of air in her lungs was heavy. She exhaled loudly again. Jenna's fingers laced through hers.

'Did you see your baby?'

Meredith nodded, unable to look at her. 'He was perfect. Six pounds, two ounces.'

Jenna's fingers squeezed hers. 'Did you give him a name?'

She had, of course. How couldn't a mother name her baby? For all the good it had done her. They had told her that his birth certificate would be reissued as soon as his new parents came to collect him;

Coming Home

Two women whose paths would never normally have crossed are flying home to New York for New Year. Both of them are more afraid than they've ever been, but for very different reasons



the privilege of bestowing his 'real' identity would fall to them. Meredith had never known who they were, or where he went. She never saw him again. All she'd had was two minutes with him that first afternoon. Two minutes of overwhelming love. One hundred and twenty seconds of indecision and regret. And then a lifetime of loss.

She turned to Jenna and gave a weak smile. 'Yes. I called him Edward, after his father.'

... * * * * *

What a small world. In more ways than one. Jenna knew New Rochelle far better than she wanted to. A swanky apartment on one of its ocean-facing streets had become home to Blake's ex-wife. Jenna had never seen inside the building, of course,

but she'd checked it out on an online realtor's site. It had cost an arm and a leg, and Blake had funded it. But that was what happened, she guessed, when long-standing marriages crumbled and kids were caught in the crossfire. She sighed and returned Meredith's smile. It was difficult to imagine the

Mum was gone. It hit her like a sledgehammer every time

quiet, residential town as a mecca for unmarried mothers in the 60s, but it just went to show that you never quite new what lay beneath the surface of middle-class respectability.

And then, there was the other thing they had in common. Jenna wondered if it would help

or hinder Meredith to know. In the end, she opted for the truth. 'I'm adopted,' Jenna said.

Meredith's eyes fixed on her. 'Don't,' Jenna said, holding her hand tightly again, 'Please don't say that you're sorry you said anything now. It's good to talk to someone from the other side, so to speak.' She let out a

laugh. She wasn't lying, it was. Meredith's experience of the adoption process had been so different to her own, but one thing did chime with her: people were always reluctant, or embarrassed, to talk about adoption face to face with someone who'd been through

it. It was still, ridiculously, taboo. 'When you said there was someone other than your sister you need to see in New York, were you talking about Edward? Are you going home to find him?'

Meredith held her gaze for a moment longer, shrugged awkwardly and took a long, final swig of her brandy.

'His father?'

Meredith looked down and loosened her hold on Jenna's hand. See, it was moments like these when she needed her mother, Jenna thought. Her mother had been the only one who ever told her to stop being so nosy, that not everything needed to be uncovered and understood, that some things were just private and should stay that way. Her mother. Not by birth, but by choice. That was something she should convey to

Meredith, too. It might help her to know that sometimes, mostly, adoptive kids were truly, deeply, loved. Jenna's chest tightened. It might help Meredith, but it was crushing at this moment to Jenna herself. Mum was gone. It hit her like a sledgehammer every time. Not coming back. Ever. 'I'm sorry,' Jenna said softly. 'None of this is my business.'

Meredith looked up, her eyes glazed with tears again. She shook her head. 'I don't mind, honest. You know what, it's refreshing to actually have a conversation about it with someone who's interested.' She smiled. 'And yes, one of the people I'm hoping to see his father. But it's not without complications.'

Jenna frowned. 'Did he marry?'

Meredith's reply, when it came, was quiet – and shocking. 'He did, to my sister actually. But Ted's been dead since 1975. I'll be visiting his grave for the first time since the 80s.'

... * * * * *

Finally, they dulled the cabin lights and a semblance of nighttime arrived. The redheaded flight attendant handed out blankets and thin cushions, and the sparse passengers settled into attempts of either movie-watching or sleep. From her aisle seat, Meredith could still see the redhead busying herself in and out of the galley, the tinsel in her hair catching the few lights that remained raised. She looked flushed and happy, and full of New Year cheer. She hoped the girl was heading home and not getting stuck in New York on a stopover. Perhaps she'd ask her. Perhaps it would look very odd if she did. No, the girl wasn't a girl, she was a woman, and she clearly knew how to fend for herself. Meredith had to stop this – this desire to mother everyone younger than herself. She had to get it into proportion. Focus. In a few hours, they'd be in New York and her hands would be full. There would be no time then for random thoughts of nurturing strangers.

Beside her, Jenna was half-

Continued overleaf





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curled in the narrow seat, her head resting on a cushion jammed against the bulkhead. Her eyes and much of her face were hidden beneath a huge eye mask, and her slender body cocooned in a blanket. She looked peaceful, Meredith thought, even though the plane kept juddering with turbulence and the seat belt sign had been on and off for the last 20 minutes. She was grateful for Jenna's serenity. What a day it must have been for her so far. And then to be stuck beside a crying, jabbering old woman on a mode of transport that clearly frightened her. The poor thing deserved her rest.

Meredith tucked her own blanket around her hips, then pulled it up over her chest. She closed her eyes. Goodness, she was tired too. But sleep would elude her, she was sure. Talking of Edward, Ted and Lainey like this had brought it all back, in fine, sharp detail. And now, of all the things she could replay on a loop, it was those 45 minutes in the car between the city and New Rochelle that she chose. Decades ago, she made a conscious decision to stop torturing herself with those moments of her life, and by and large, she'd succeeded. But the lid had been well and truly removed from that particular box now. It was perverse, the little punishments your mind dealt out. But on the other hand, perhaps it was fitting. Because it was in that three quarters of an hour, as Meredith was at her most vulnerable, that her twisted, duplicitous sister dropped her bombshell: she and Ted were dating now, and it was serious.

Meredith couldn't rest. She opened her eyes, and glanced around. She wasn't alone. Not everyone was asleep. A puddle of light still came from the galley about 10 rows ahead, and dotted around the cabin several seat-back screens flashed out a variety of movies. She could do that, couldn't she? Turn hers on, attempt to shake off Lainey, and lose herself in a comedy. But it might wake Jenna and, besides, she had no idea how to

work the thing. In her day, it was revolutionary when each cabin was fitted with one screen at the front that they had to manually wind down, and every passenger was handed a pair of headphones to plug into their seat. It was an all-or-nothing experience. You watched it at the same time as everyone else. No changing channels, no rewinding, and quite often, with appalling sound. But to them, it had seemed the bees knees. The thought made her smile. The redhead's mother would have been a child herself then. Lord, how times had changed. Aeronautics had remained basically the same, but the industry around it had morphed into an entirely different beast. *An entirely different beast.* The words played over in her head. That was it, that was at the crux of the years

Mothers were supposed to fight tooth and claw for their children

of fermented anger with Lainey: the sister she had thought she'd grown up alongside had turned out not to be real at all. She had transformed into an entirely different beast on that journey from Meredith's apartment to New Rochelle. When they left, Lainey had been a loving, albeit controlling, sibling. But by the time they arrived, she was a spiteful monster, never to change back again.

Meredith squeezed her eyes tightly shut again. She should have stopped it then.

She should have gone to the maternity home, had Edward, and kept hold of him. Mothers were meant to be like lionesses, weren't they? Instinct was

meant to blind them. They were supposed to fight tooth and claw for their children. Why then had she been so weak?

... * * * * *

When Jenna woke, stiff and cold, the cabin lights were on full again and Meredith's seat was empty. Slowly, she unravelled her arm from the blanket, and checked her watch. There were only 90 minutes left. For her, it was quite possible that the final half-hour of descent and landing would be horrendous, but at least it stood the chance of being better than usual.

Because this time she wasn't alone. Well, she wouldn't be when Meredith returned.

She unfolded her legs and held her arms above her head, stretching her neck and shoulders. Her eye caught sight of Meredith's soft grey hair. She stood half in the galley, her back to the cabin, chatting to a flight attendant. Jenna smiled. It was good to see. Even with her own fear of flying, the few tales Meredith had told her were fascinating. There were probably hundreds more. She'd bet anything on Meredith having led quite a life of it when she'd flown the world. Jenna's smile faded. But at what cost? Her sister sounded a complete piece of work. How on earth had she

persuaded Meredith not to tell anyone about the baby, to dump the father and then effectively to dump the baby too? And then, to top it all, start dating – and ultimately marry – the father herself? It was no wonder Meredith hated her. Lainey should count herself lucky that Jenna hadn't been her sister; if she had been, there was no way she'd have lasted another 50 years in one piece.

'Good sleep?'

Jenna nodded, smiling at Meredith. 'Surprisingly, yes! Did you get some?'

Meredith slipped back into her seat, a little stiffly, Jenna thought. 'Some,' she replied, although Jenna doubted it given

the redness of the woman's eyes.

'So,' Jenna said, 'are we about to be served tea and coffee?'

Meredith smiled. 'She's just getting it ready.'

'You really miss all this, don't you?'

Meredith hesitated. 'I did when I stopped, but I'm far too old now.'

'How old were you?'

'When I stopped? I was 31. Getting too long in the tooth for Pan Am.' Meredith rebuked her seat belt loosely. 'Besides, I got married, and you couldn't do that and stay.'

'What? My God, that's archaic.'

Meredith shrugged and gave a small smile. 'That's just how it was back then. No pregnancies, no children, no husbands. We all accepted it. Women generally did in those days. I'd had seven years of flying by then, and I'd seen everywhere I wanted to.'

Jenna watched Meredith as she neatened the blanket across her knees and straightened the magazines in the seat in front of her. Seven years. The dates all added up. 'So, you left in 1975. The year Ted died?'

Meredith stopped tidying.

'Were the two things connected, by any chance?' Jenna asked, softly.

Meredith turned to face her, her eyes locking on Jenna's. 'Are you sure you're a model and not a detective?' she asked, her mouth turning into a smile. 'You ask an awful lot of questions?'

'Oh,' Jenna said, putting her hands to her head. 'I do! I'm so sorry. My mum always says... said... that I ought to engage my brain more before diving in. Forgive me?'

Meredith's smile widened and she reached across for Jenna's hand. 'It's OK. It's good to be interested in other people. I'm guessing in your profession, that's quite a rare commodity.'

Not for the first time, Jenna took Meredith's hand in her own and found herself thinking how blessed she was to have met this woman. 'I never wanted to meet my birth mother,' Jenna said. 'I know who she is. I know roughly where she is. And that's

Continued overleaf

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enough for me. But I've got no idea who my birth father is. I have really wondered about him over the years. I guess your story just makes me even more nosey than normal. I'm sorry.' They stared at each other. What Jenna didn't say was that she'd give a thousand birth mothers just to have her adopted one back again, if only for a day. What she didn't say was that blood isn't the strongest tie; love is. Being there is. Going through the thick and thin with your child is.

'I was working out of the New York City hub in 1975,' Meredith said, taking a long breath. 'Knowing that Ted and Lainey were married and lived

'We talked. Like we'd never talked before. All day and into the evening'

just around the corner from me had become easier over time. I didn't ever see them. As far as I was aware, he didn't know about Edward. Not unless Lainey had told him and I doubted that. So, my life carried on. Without them in it.' Meredith pushed back a strand of grey fringe from her eyes. 'In 1971, Lainey had a baby of her own. A girl. That sealed it for me. I threw myself even more into work and started dating again. What is it they say about frogs and princes?' Meredith laughed.

'Well, let's just say I kissed a few.' Jenna's eyes filled with unexpected tears. This part of the story sounded so achingly similar to her own. If Blake hadn't come along, would she still be kissing frogs?

'The summer of 1975 was boiling hot in New York,' Meredith continued. 'I had a couple of weeks' leave and I didn't know what to do with myself. Time off was just so unusual. By then, I was seeing an English guy called James and he telephoned me one morning, asking me to marry him. I was so shocked, I didn't reply. I just hid in Central Park every day from then on, avoiding his calls.'

'You saw Ted again, didn't you?' Jenna's voice wavered. Meredith nodded. 'One day,

I literally stumbled into him.' 'What happened?'

'We talked. Like we'd never talked before. All day and into the evening, sitting on the grass.' Meredith looked down. 'Eventually I told him about Edward.'

'My God, what did he say?'

When Meredith looked back up, her eyes were flooded with tears. 'He cried. I'd always been the one, he said. Lainey, despite everything she'd done and said, wasn't the love of his life.'

Meredith sniffed. 'By the evening, we'd agreed that he would go home and tell her their marriage was over. It all sounded so possible, the way he said it. We even talked about

finding Edward and somehow bringing him home.'

Jenna's heart raced. 'So, what on earth happened to him?'

The tears fell on to Meredith's cheeks. 'He always loved motorbikes. That night, on the way back to Lainey, some local kids had busted open a fire hydrant in the heat and his bike skidded on the water. I guess he'd been going too fast and he braked to avoid them. No-one wore crash helmets in those days. My mother told me years later that he died instantly.'

Jenna's own tears blurred her vision. 'So, Lainey never knew? He never told her that he chose you, not her?'

Meredith shook her head and took a deep breath. She reached into her handbag for a packet of tissues. 'But you know what,' she said, dabbing one to her face, 'she's carried on spreading poison into my life.' She looked back up at Jenna, her once soft grey eyes now a steely granite. 'The real reason I'm here isn't because I'm desperate to see her before she dies. In all honesty, my conscience is clear there. No. It's much more basic than that. She says she's spoken to Edward. And she'll only tell me what he said if I come home.'

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CUT OUT AND KEEP

Answers to 12 December Puzzles

JUMBO CROSSWORD Across 1 Sexist. 5 Brims. 8 Labourer. 14 Excel. 15 Unwrapped. 16 Inflate. 17 Tutu. 18 Scurry. 19 Robot. 20 Rainy. 22 Reddened. 23 Teller. 25 Rasher. 28 Strainer. 30 Arouse. 31 Bedbug. 35 Infancy. 37 Atlas. 39 Eyes. 40 Moth. 41 Amen. 42 Ally. 43 Solar. 45 Replica. 48 Fearne. 49 Accent. 51 Prolongs. 55 As well. 57 Lotion. 58 Laughter. 62 Amber. 63 Tunic. 64 Stodge. 65 Hi-fi. 67 Thimble. 68 Allotment. 69 Haste. 70 Releases. 71 Ronan. 72 Ninety. **Down** 2 Excited. 3 Idle. 4 Truncheon. 5 Beware. 6 Italy. 7 Superfluous. 8 Ladybirds. 9 Blisters. 10 Unforeseen. 11 Evasive. 12 Feature. 13 Meryl. 21 Remain. 24 Email. 26 Creamy. 27 Egghead. 29 Taffeta. 32 Boozing. 33 Giraffe. 34 Rear. 36 Yule. 38 Ago. 39 Europe. 43 Spectacular. 44 Lotto. 46 Plough. 47 Unbearable. 50 Calendars. 52 Orang-utan. 53 Plotters. 54 Praised. 56 Sublime. 59 Twinset. 60 Salty. 61 Coleen. 64 Sit-in. 66 Shun. **Answer:** Tom Collins.

CROSSWORD Across 1 Whisper. 5 Dentist. 10 Ague. 11 Originated. 12 Merriest. 13 Sahara. 14 Lion. 15 Lithograph. 17 Stewardess. 19 Able. 20 Cobble. 22 Dish up. 23 Additional. 25 Ivan. 26 Cruelty. 27 Tyrants. **Down** 2 Hygienist. 3 Swear in. 4 Erode. 6 Emissions. 7 Teacher. 8 Steer. 9 Lift attendant. 15 Larcenist. 16 Pollutant. 18 Website. 19 America. 21 Order. 23 Silky. **Answer:** Kirsch.

LINKWORDS SOLUTION Leaves. Breath. Dearly. Ginger. Nature. Sister. Coffee. Sports. Window. Hockey **Answer:** Whisky sour.

WORDWISE SOLUTION Clever. Clue. Clues. Creel. Cruel. Curl. Curls. Else. Elusive. Elver. Evil. Isle. Leer. Leers. Leisure. Lever. Levers. Levies. Lies. Lieu. Live. Liver. Lives. Lucre. Lure. Lures. Recluse. Reel. Reels. Relic. Relies. Relive. Relives. Revel. Revels. Revile. Reviles. Rile. Riles. Rule. Rules. Servile. Silver. Slice. Slicer. Sliver. Sluice. Slur. Ulcer. Veil. Veils. Vesicle. Vile. Viler. **Answer:** Reclusive.

WORDWISE SOLUTION Alive. Anvil. Aver. Avers. Evil. Laver. Live. Liven. Liver. Lives. Naevus. Nave. Navel. Naïve. Rave. Ravel. Raven. Raves. Ravine. Revs. Rival. Rivals. Rive. Riven. Salve. Salver. Save. Saver. Serval. Silva. Silver. Slave. Slaver. Sliver. Snivel. Suave. Unravel. Unravels. Unveil. Unveils. Uvea. Vain. Vale. Valise. Value. Valuer. Values. Vane. Varies. Vase. Veal. Veil. Veils. Vein. Veins. Venal. Venial. Vernal. Vial. Vies. Vile. Viler. Vine. Viral. Virus. Visa. Visual. **Answer:** Universal.

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Jumbo Puzzle

JUST FOR FUN!

Simply fill in the crossword (right) and read down the letters in the shaded squares to reveal **a sweet snack (6,4)**.

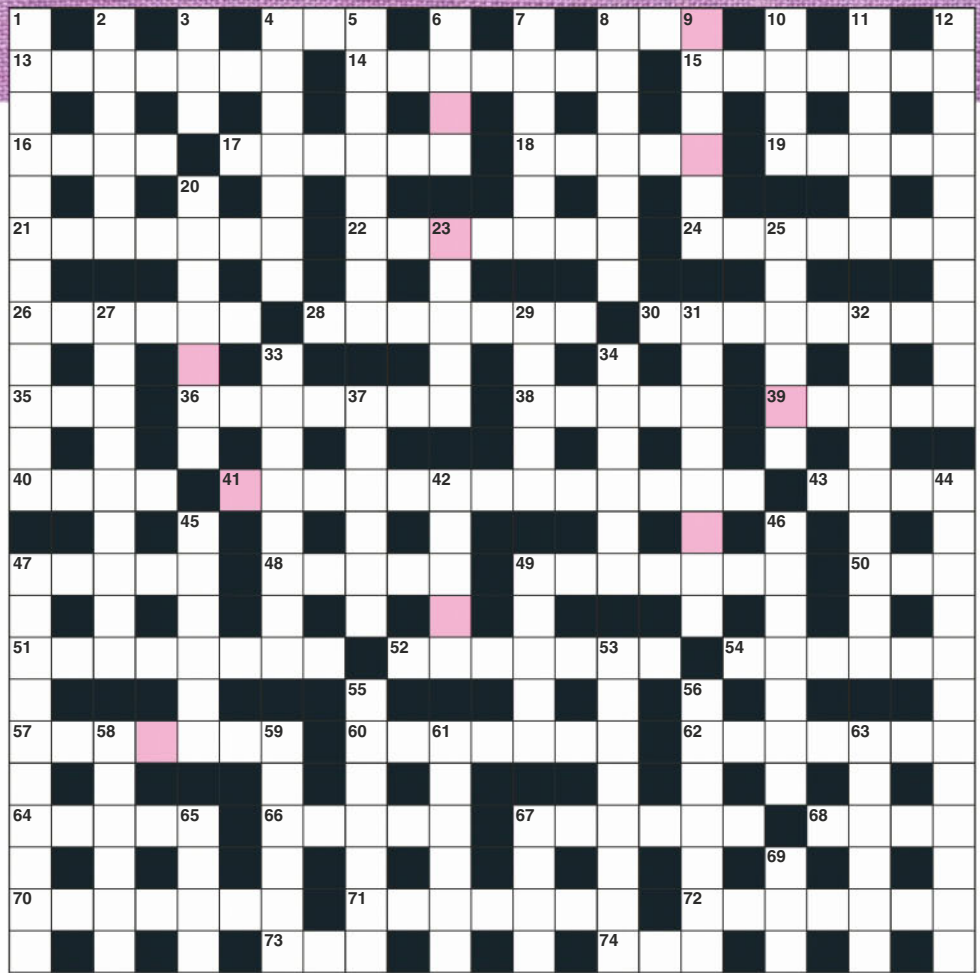
Across

- 4 Crab's pinch (3)
- 8 Not cooked (3)
- 13 Organised series of yacht races (7)
- 14 Blotting out of the Sun or the Moon (7)
- 15 Having no goal (7)
- 16 Wagging part of a dog! (4)
- 17 Smashed to pieces (6)
- 18 ___ Horan, member of boy band One Direction (5)
- 19 Soft leather with a rough surface (5)
- 21 Competition participant (7)
- 22 Absurd, daft (7)
- 24 Moves like a goose (7)
- 26 Teasingly mischievous (6)
- 28 Prisoner who has been found guilty of a charge (7)
- 30 Wavy line (8)
- 35 Meadow, pasture (3)
- 36 Fridge in a hotel room (7)
- 38 Defence alleging a suspect was elsewhere (5)
- 39 Fish of the salmon family (5)
- 40 Be dressed in (4)
- 41 Lack of any good quality (13)
- 43 Look lustfully (4)
- 47 Amount of money for which an item is bought or sold (5)
- 48 Bent down ready to pray (5)
- 49 Baby frog (7)
- 50 ___ Angeles, Hollywood's city (3)
- 51 Person who does boring menial tasks (8)
- 52 Releases a latch on (7)
- 54 Door fixture (6)
- 57 Snake (7)
- 60 Instructor (7)
- 62 Far-reaching, extreme (7)

- 64 Ancient object (5)
- 66 Person who cares for children (5)
- 67 Military greeting (6)
- 68 Image not in focus (4)
- 70 Football team nicknamed 'the Gunners' (7)
- 71 Remove from contact with the public (7)
- 72 Facial feature raised to express disapproval (7)
- 73 Moray ____, fish (3)
- 74 Beam of sunlight (3)

Down

- 1 Sister's husband (7-2-3)
- 2 Prejudiced against elderly people (6)
- 3 Pigs' enclosure (3)
- 4 Provide a commentary in a book or play (7)
- 5 Infant's glimpsing game (8)
- 6 Prepare a scheme (4)
- 7 Squidgy item for the bath (6)
- 8 Slip back into bad ways (7)
- 9 Luxuriate (in) (6)
- 10 Short name for the festive season (4)
- 11 Breakfast food (6)
- 12 Estimate, evaluation (10)
- 20 Seedless variety of mandarin orange (7)
- 23 At no time (5)
- 25 Small and delicate (6)
- 27 Making calmer (9)
- 29 Confusion, disorder (5)
- 31 TV question and answer contest (4,4)



- 32 Crawled, toadied (9)
- 33 Opened (a wine bottle) (8)
- 34 Autographed (6)
- 37 Pancake mixture (6)
- 42 ___ American, style of ballroom dancing (5)
- 44 Actor who played the title role in the 2014 film *Noah* (7,5)
- 45 Small beach stone (6)
- 46 Roofed balcony (7)
- 47 Person on foot (10)
- 49 Rose's prickle (5)
- 53 Exciting film (8)
- 55 Kitchen gadget (7)
- 56 First name of pop singer Ms Spears (7)
- 58 Hamburger sauce (6)
- 59 Intertwined mess (6)
- 61 In whatever manner (6)
- 63 Crisp salad stalk (6)
- 65 Roadworks marker (4)
- 67 Concrete chunk (4)
- 69 Early morning moisture (3)

Wordwise

You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters shown in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No letter can be used more than once in each word. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which this week's clue is: *Body part covered by a nail*



WORD COUNT
29 = Good.
More than
35 = Well done!

You can work it out...



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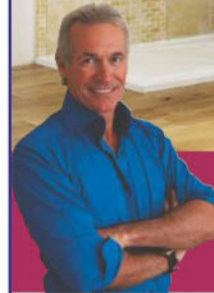
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The Bright Side

Despite malfunctioning machines, Mr Dear stays positive

We know our place here on the back page, the whole team. That's the make-up people, the lady who does my hair, the script supervisor, the intern who puts the flowers in my dressing room, the charming young man who combs Mr Dear's moustache, and the body double who plays Mrs Beasley, the charity shop manager, in the demanding stunt scenes. (You remember the day she chased a supposed burglar out of the shop and fell off her high heels? That required four retakes before the editor was satisfied.)

We know that it's our job to cheer you up. And our work is most important at this time of year. Once the arthritic knees-ups of Christmas and New Year are over, it seems as if there's nothing to look forward to but grey skies, a slight feeling of disappointment on Valentine's Day, and – at long last – the arrival of spring.

This is why we are putting on a brave face, Mr Dear and I, and looking on the bright side. In his case, of course, it's a brave face that is decorated with a beautifully groomed moustache.

We started putting on a brave face when the car broke down on Boxing Day. For Mr Dear, the training kicked in and he did what Mr Dears do. That is, he snorted for a moment and eventually decided to open the bonnet to see what was wrong. When this didn't do any good, he came back into the warm, phoned the RAC, sighed, and announced, 'We're very lucky really to be a part of this very special moment.'

'What do you mean?' I said, because the moment didn't feel particularly special. If anybody feels particularly special sitting on a dull stretch of bypass and waiting to get slightly colder, then they should probably get out more (although if they do, I recommend avoiding the bypass).

'Think of it this way,' said Mr D. 'When was the last time our car broke down?'

To be honest, I haven't been keeping properly authenticated records. But I do remember my first or second date with Mr Dear, when I ended up pushing his Triumph Herald along a road, in drizzling

rain, while he sat inside and steered. 'What sort of man,' I thought to myself, 'tries to impress his date by making her push his stupid car, getting her dirty in the process?'

Mr Dear did say, by the way, that this was the moment he thought I might be Mrs Dear material. 'Not only did you not moan,' he said, 'but you didn't half look lovely with your wet hair and a smudge of oil on your cheek.' That should have been a warning.

'Come to think of it, when was the last time you saw any car broken down on the side of the road?' Mr D continued. 'You used to see it all the time. Old cars were always breaking down. But modern cars just keep going.'

'Apart from this one,' I observed.

As it happens, the problem was not serious. A pipe had come loose, or corroded, or just lost the will: life as an engine pipe is notoriously unrewarding.

Then, the dishwasher came out in sympathy. One moment it was washing dishes and the next it had tripped all the circuits in the kitchen.

'You looked lovely with wet hair and a smudge of oil on your cheek'

Remember, though, that we are looking on the bright side.

'You know,' said Mr Dear as he braced himself for another shift of drying dishes, 'I'm rather enjoying this.'

'Enjoying what?'

'Doing the dishes by hand,' he said. 'It's what we used to do, and I rather miss it.'

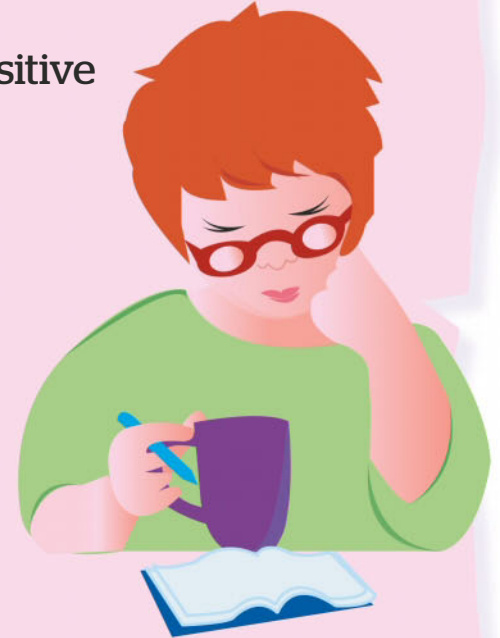
'That's rich coming from somebody who squeals like a stuck pig every time he's asked to load the dishwasher.'

'It's the companionship, I suppose,' he says. 'In our busy lives, it's one of the few chances that couples get for a long chat.'

Ah yes. Veterans of washing and drying the dishes by hand will remember how those companionable long chats used to go.

Her: I'll wash, and you dry.

Him: Oh no you don't. I always have to



do the drying. This time, I'll wash and you can do the drying.

Her: Have it your own way.

Him: Washing is a much better job. You're your own boss, for a start. If you're drying up, you depend for your work on the person who's washing.

Her: You can be very odd sometimes.

Him: And when you're drying, the towel gets wet so quickly.

Her: This plate's still dirty.

Him: Show me!

Her: On the back. You missed the back.

Him: I haven't missed the back – that's a permanent stain.

Her: No, it's not. Give it here.

Him: If you think you can do better, why don't you wash then?

Her: Because you said you wanted to.

This carried on until the invention of the dishwasher, when men and women instead began to argue about whether forks should be put in with actual the fork-end down, or not.

What this all proves, of course, is the old theory that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. Although most astronomers now concede that, on Venus at least, the inhabitants know how to stack a dishwasher properly.

Rosie

