

Women's Health



Strength Training, Simplified

Our 6-Move Circuit Hits Every Major Muscle Group



Is This Supplement

The Key To Longevity?



How To Meal-Prep...

Without Devoting A Whole Day To It

COUNTRY MUSIC STAR

Kelsea Ballerini

On Learning To Love Therapy

+
The Neurological Condition That's On The Rise In Women

page 40



ONLY1™

CLEAN COSMETICS

COLOR™
ECCENTRIC

Choosing color combinations online
MADE EASY.



Find the perfect color for your skin tone.



WE WOULD
LOVE TO HEAR
FROM YOU
1-800-517-1310



"Color Eccentric™" offers a convenient solution for selecting eye and lip colors that complement your skin tone. Whether it's a casual daytime look or a special event, you can easily find the perfect shades for any occasion.

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT [ONLY1COSMETICS.COM](https://www.ONLY1COSMETICS.COM)



ONLY1

CLEAN COSMETICS



AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT [ONLY1COSMETICS.COM](https://www.ONLY1COSMETICS.COM)

DISCOVER SOMETHING
DIFFERENT
30% OFF

— SITE WIDE —

Use coupon code:
Crave30WH

An innovative liquid
lipstick with a unique
mousse-like texture.

**CRAVING
FOR COLOR
CLEAN MATTE
LIQUID LIPSTICK**



WE WOULD
LOVE TO HEAR
FROM YOU
1-800-517-1310



JESSICA IS WEARING
CRAVING FOR COLOR IN CRIMSON

in this issue

6 Editor's Letter / 11 The Warmup / 63 Deep Dives / 100 Finisher

november/
december 2024



94



50

64 Prep School

How to make protein-packed meals that will be ready and waiting

72

Growing Forward

Musician Kelsea Ballerini is in her transformative era—and sharing all.

80

The Rise of the Gentle C-Section

Finally, a different way to address the procedure

86

Back to the Basics

Master six moves, then learn how to level them up for an even bigger mind and body payoff.

94

Skin Goals

Meet the winners of *WH*'s 2024 Skincare Awards. Glowiness, right ahead!

“Resilience is about bouncing back from adversity, and optimism is about thriving in the face of it.”

—Sue Varma, MD, “Silver Linings Playbook,” p. 54



26



20

Cover photographed by Caleb & Gladys. Styling: Kristen Saladino. Hair: Jacob Rozenberg at The Wall Group using Pantene. Make-up: Kelsey Deenihan at The Wall Group using CoverGirl. Manicure: Julie Kandalec at Bryan Bantry Agency using Gelish Cream Gel. Set design: Sarah Caye.

Women's Health Vol. 21, No. 6 (ISSN 0884-7355) is published bimonthly by Hearst, at 300 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019. Steven R. Swartz, President & Chief Executive Officer; William R. Hearst III, Chairman; Frank A. Bennack, Jr., Executive Vice Chairman. **Hearst Magazines, Inc.:** Debi Chirichella, President; Regina Buckley, Chief Financial and Strategy Officer; Treasurer: Catherine A. Bostron, Secretary. © 2024 by Hearst Magazines, Inc. All rights reserved. *Women's Health* is a registered trademark of Hearst Magazines, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 5071.5.2); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address corrections to *Women's Health*, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593. IN CANADA: Postage paid at Gateway, Mississauga, Ontario; Canada Post International Publications Mail Agreement Number 40012499. GST #R122988611. Mailing Lists: From time to time we make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such mailings by postal mail, please send your current mailing label or exact copy to: *Women's Health*, Mail Preference Center, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593-1500. **Customer Service:** Call 1-800-324-1731 or write to *Women's Health* Customer Service, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593-1500.

ELLSA (MID FACE); BETTY MAGES (SKI LIFT); BUNNER; JOE LINGEMAN (BERRIES); AN BALLERINI (COVER); NIKE Y. JACOUEAUS (SPA); ALO SKIRT; ARNETTE SUZUKI; JASSE; JENNIFER ZEUNER EARRINGS (FRONT); MARA PARIS RING (RIGHT HAND); SELINA KING RINGS (LEFT HAND); MIDDLE FINGER); KELESA'S OWN EARRINGS (BACK); MORN THROUGH GROUT

Sleep Better Together™

Only Sleep Number® smart beds let you make each side firmer or softer for your ideal comfort, whenever you like — your Sleep Number® setting. From \$999*

45

Softer

55

Firmer

sleep  number®



#1 in Customer Satisfaction
with Mattresses Purchased In-Store†

visit sleepnumber.com/womenshealth
1-877-832-9738

Picture may represent features and options available at additional cost. *\$249 delivery required. Total price of Queen c1: \$1,248. Prices higher in AK and HI.

†For J.D. Power 2023 award information, visit jdpower.com/awards



Magnlens sports bra, magnlens.com; IRO pants, iroparis.com for similar styles; Schutz sandals, schutz-shoes.com; Jovana Djuric hoops, jovanadjuric.com; Fierce Forward necklace, fierceforward.com



▶ **Endorphin High**
Sweating with friends like Ginger and Claudette always rockets my energy upward.

Team Spirit

How *WH* editors take care of themselves during the holidays...



"I keep my normal split—four days of strength training and two days of running—when things get stressful. It makes me feel a bit more sane when I'm traveling."
—Addison Aloian, assistant editor



"Going on family walks with all of our pups—including my dog Lucy [pictured]—is always a fun way to stay active and create special memories at the same time."
—Lindsay Geller, lifestyle director



"I've learned the importance of taking time for myself—whether that's a long run or a hot bath—amidst the chaos and family time. It makes me feel more in control of my emotions."
—Lily Wohlner, associate fashion commerce editor

Most mornings, I work out solo at my local YMCA in Brooklyn.

But on a recent a.m., I met two badass women at the office gym for a training session. One was Ginger Ressler, the 50-year-old cofounder of Fabletics. The other, Claudette Sariya, is an alumna of *WH*'s Strength in Diversity program, which mentors trainers from underrepresented communities. (Meet the newest class on page 93!)

Claudette told us exactly what to do, and Ginger and I gamely followed her directions. My friends, you think you lift heavy until you see your workout buddy pick up 30-pound dumbbells for three sets of thrusters. I took a deep breath, then leveled up my own weights...and whew, it was spicy! Ginger and I posted the session to social media, so if you saw it, then you already know that the effort of step-ups, squats, and more made my legs quiver cartoonishly with effort.

Claudette nailed the programming, vibes, and energy. And I am so pleased that now *you* get to experience her awesomeness, because she is both the architect and the model for our "Back to Basics" fitness feature on page 86. Her foundational movements can

be done anywhere and are perfect for sneaking a sweat into your busy holiday schedule; plus, she shows how to elevate the challenge depending on your experience.

Speaking of the hecticness of this season, we have an entire double-issue's worth of tips and tools to help you move through it feeling your best. Check out the high-protein meal prep recipes on page 64 to set yourself up for a week of healthy food. Get extra glowy with our annual Skincare Awards on page 94. And read Kelsea Ballerini's cover story on page 72, where the country music star vulnerably shares how hard work in therapy helped her grow through the toughest chapters of her life. She's feeling healthier and stronger than ever...and I know you'll be inspired by her journey.

You'll find plenty of motivation across all *WH* platforms this time of year, but I also hope you find time to just *chill*. My preferred method: a mug of cocoa with my kids. Whatever your version of a slowdown, remember that balance is a superpower. Calibrate your own "hustle/downtime" dial to land on the ratio that makes you feel best. I'll be looking for that sweet spot too!

liz

LIZ BAKER PLOSSER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
@lizplosser

JUSTIN STEELE (PLOSSER), STYLING: KRISTEN SALADINO, HAIR AND MAKEUP: SHANE MONDEN; COURTESY OF SUBJECT (4)

Systane[®]
P R E S E N T S



MULTI-SYMPTOM DRY EYE RELIEF

STARRING **TINA THE TIRED ONE**, **DREW THE DRY ONE** AND **IRENE THE IRRITATED ONE**.
CO-STARRING **THE SORE ONE**, **THE BURNING ONE**, **THE STINGING ONE** AND **THE WATERY ONE**.

Systane Complete's preservative-free formula lasts up to 8 hours.

OPEN YOUR EYES TO LASTING RELIEF.

© 2024 Alcon Inc. US-SYX-2400012



\$3 Off

Any ONE (1) SYSTANE[®]
Lubricant Eye Drops
(8ml or Larger)

EXPIRATION DATE 06/30/2025

030065-107929



Coupon void if altered, copied, sold, purchased, transferred, exchanged or where prohibited by law. CONSUMER: Limit one coupon per specified item(s) purchased. This coupon good only on product sizes and varieties indicated. RETAILER: ALCON VISION, LLC will reimburse you face value plus 8¢, if submitted in compliance with ALCON VISION, LLC Coupon Redemption Policy, available upon request. Consumer must pay sales tax. Cash value 1/20 cent. Good only in USA. Mail to: Inmar Brand Solutions Dept. 30065, Mfr Rcv Office, 801 UNION PACIFIC BLVD STE 5, LAREDO TX 78045-9475.

Women's Health

ADVISORY BOARD

CARDIOLOGY

Jennifer H. Mieres, MD Professor of cardiology, Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell; senior vice president, Center for Equity of Care, Northwell Health

DERMATOLOGY

Mona Gohara, MD Associate clinical professor, department of dermatology, Yale School of Medicine

Ellen Marmur, MD Founder, Marmur Medical

Joshua Zeichner, MD Director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City

FAMILY MEDICINE

Navya Mysore, MD Primary care physician; sexual and reproductive health expert

FERTILITY

Sheeva Talebian, MD Fertility specialist and reproductive endocrinologist, OCRM New York

FITNESS

Ariel Belgrave, CPT Board-certified health and fitness coach; Under Armour athlete; creator of the L.E.A.N. Method, DEI wellness expert

Ben Bruno, CFSC Certified functional strength coach and private trainer

Sohee Carpenter, MS, CSCS Evidence-based fitness coach and certified sports nutritionist; author of *Eat.Lift.Thrive.*

Betina Gozo, CFSC Certified functional strength coach; NASM corrective exercise specialist; Nike master trainer; creator of *Women's Health's The Woman's Guide to Strength Training*

Lauren Kanski, CPT NASM-certified personal trainer; functional strength and conditioning specialist; kettlebell skills specialist

Stacy T. Sims, PhD Exercise physiologist; nutrition scientist; author of *Roar: How to Match Your Food and Fitness to Your Female Physiology for Optimum Performance, Great Health, and a Strong, Lean Body for Life*

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

Robin Berzin, MD Founder and CEO, Parsley Health

Frank Lipman, MD Founder and director, Eleven Eleven Wellness Center; creator, Be Well

Gabrielle Lyon, DO Founder, Institute for Muscle-Centric Medicine

GASTROENTEROLOGY

Samantha Nazareth, MD Board-certified gastroenterologist

GYNECOLOGY

Jessica Shepherd, MD, MBA Minimally invasive gynecology, Baylor University Medical Center; founder, Her Viewpoint

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Keri Peterson, MD Physician, internal medicine; medical advisor, HealthiNation.com

MENTAL HEALTH

Ken Duckworth, MD Medical director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NEUROSCIENCE

Claudia Aguirre, PhD Neuroscientist; founder, DoctorClaudia, Inc.

NUTRITION

Keri Glassman, RD President, Keri Glassman, Nutritious Life; author of *The O₂ Diet*

Amanda Baker Lemein, RD, MS Registered dietitian; nutrition communications specialist

ONCOLOGY

Karen H. Lu, MD Chair, department of gynecologic oncology and reproductive medicine, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Jen Fraboni, PT, DPT Creator, The Mobility Method and The Optimal Body

RELATIONSHIPS

Chloe Carmichael, PhD Clinical psychologist; founder, Carmichael Psychology; author of *Nervous Energy: Harness the Power of Your Anxiety*

Shawntres Parks, PhD, LMFT Licensed marriage and family therapist; cofounder, Parks & Powers Psychotherapy; core faculty, Antioch University Seattle

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LIZ BAKER PLOSSER

EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Abigail Cuffey** EXECUTIVE DIGITAL DIRECTOR **Amanda Woerner**

MANAGING EDITOR **Laura McLaughlin**

DESIGN DIRECTOR **Betsy Halsey**

SENIOR DEPUTY DIGITAL EDITOR **Maridel Reyes**

DIRECTOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS **Amanda Lucci**

ART DIRECTOR **Christine Giordano**

DEPUTY EDITOR, COMMERCE **Christian Gollayan**

COPY & RESEARCH CHIEF **Marli Higa**

EXECUTIVE HEALTH & FITNESS DIRECTOR **Jacqueline Andriakos**

BEAUTY DIRECTOR **Brian Underwood**

ENTERTAINMENT DIRECTOR **Maxwell Losgar**

LIFESTYLE DIRECTOR **Lindsay Geller**

SENIOR DIGITAL DESIGNER **Abigail Shuster**

SENIOR BEAUTY EDITOR **Danielle Jackson**

FITNESS EDITOR **Talene Appleton**

NEWS & FEATURES EDITOR **Currie Engel**

LIFESTYLE COMMERCE EDITOR **Jasmine Gomez**

FITNESS COMMERCE EDITOR **Nicolette Accardi**

LOVE & LIFE EDITOR **Lydia Wang**

ASSOCIATE HEALTH & WELLNESS EDITOR **Tianna Soto**

ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR **Charlotte Walsh**

ASSOCIATE FASHION COMMERCE EDITOR **Lily Wohlner**

ASSOCIATE VISUAL EDITOR **Jason Speakman**

ASSISTANT LOVE & LIFE EDITOR **Addison Aloian**

ASSISTANT SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR **Isabel McMahon**

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS **Olivia Luppino, Sabrina Talbert**

CONTRIBUTORS

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR **Amy Wilkinson**

JUNIOR DESIGNER **Briana Rengifo**

FASHION ASSISTANT **Alexandra Juric**

FASHION

EXECUTIVE FASHION DIRECTOR **Kristen Saladino**

ASSISTANT FASHION EDITOR **Rose Lauture**

FOOD

CHIEF FOOD DIRECTOR **Kate Merker**

DEPUTY FOOD EDITOR **Trish Clasen Marsanico**

RECIPE EDITOR **Susan Choung**

FOOD PRODUCER **Tina Martinez**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Becca Miller**

ASSISTANT EDITORS **Joy Cho, Samantha MacAvoy**

HEARST VISUAL GROUP

CHIEF VISUAL CONTENT DIRECTOR, HEARST MAGAZINES **Alix Campbell**

EXECUTIVE VISUAL DIRECTOR **Fabienne Le Roux**

DEPUTY VISUAL DIRECTOR **Dangi McCoy**

SENIOR VISUAL EDITOR **Emily Adar**

VISUAL ASSISTANT **Berkeley Brooks**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, FITNESS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Ebenezer Samuel**

FINANCE & OPERATIONS

DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING & MEDIA SERVICES **Elizabeth Bloom**

EDITORIAL BUSINESS MANAGER **Caryn Kanare**

WOMENSHEALTHMAG.COM



HEARST MAGAZINES ADVERTISING INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

FOOD, PHARMA, LIQUOR, CPG & PET **Patricia Haegele**

FASHION & LUXURY **Haley Bachmann**

BEAUTY, WELLNESS & MASS RETAIL **Elizabeth Webbe Lunny**

HOME & DESIGN **Jennifer Levene Bruno**

TRAVEL, TECH, FINANCE, AND OUTDOOR **Chris Peel**

CATEGORY LEADERS

Corianne Carroll, Karen Deutsch, Dan Fuchs, Christine L. Hall, David Hamilton, RW Horton, Bridget McGuire, Courtney Pappas, Sara Rad, Julie Spitalnick, Bill Upton, John Wattiker

WOMEN'S HEALTH

VP, BRAND STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT **Brent Williams Allen**

BRAND STRATEGY LEAD **Marnie Braverman**

SENIOR DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS **Jaime Marsanico**

HEARST MAGAZINES

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER **Todd Haskell**

HEARST MEDIA SOLUTIONS **Tom Kirwan**

HEARST DATA SOLUTIONS **Mike Nuzzo**

ADVERTISING REVENUE OPERATIONS **Rachael Savage**

CIRCULATION

VP, STRATEGY AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT **Rick Day**

PUBLISHED BY HEARST

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER **Steven R. Swartz**

CHAIRMAN **William R. Hearst III**

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN **Frank A. Bennack, Jr.**

HEARST MAGAZINES MEDIA, INC.

PRESIDENT **Debi Chirichella**

GENERAL MANAGER, HEARST ENTHUSIAST & WELLNESS GROUP

Brian Madden

GLOBAL CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER **Lisa Ryan Howard**

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR **Lucy Kaylin**

CHIEF FINANCIAL & STRATEGY OFFICER; TREASURER

Regina Buckley

CONSUMER GROWTH OFFICER **Lindsay Horrigan**

CHIEF PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY OFFICER **Daniel Bernard**

PRESIDENT, HEARST MAGAZINES INTERNATIONAL **Jonathan Wright**

SECRETARY **Catherine A. Bostron**

PUBLISHING CONSULTANTS **Gilbert C. Maurer, Mark F. Miller**

MAIN OFFICE 300 W. 57TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019 ONLINE SERVICE.WOMENSHEALTHMAG.COM CUSTOMER CARE 800-324-1731

EMAIL WHLCUSTSERV@CDSFULFILLMENT.COM MAIL WOMEN'S HEALTH CUSTOMER SERVICE, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500

FOR LICENSING AND REPRINTS CONTACT WYNDELL HAMILTON AT WRIGHT'S MEDIA, 281-419-5725 X152, WHAMILTON@WRIGHTSMEDIA.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2024 HEARST MAGAZINES, INC. WOMEN'S HEALTH IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF HEARST MAGAZINES, INC.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS BY POSTAL MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL OR EXACT COPY TO: WOMEN'S HEALTH, MAIL PREFERENCE CENTER, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500.

FOR LICENSING AND REPRINTS CONTACT WYNDELL HAMILTON AT WRIGHT'S MEDIA, 281-419-5725 X152, WHAMILTON@WRIGHTSMEDIA.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2024 HEARST MAGAZINES, INC. WOMEN'S HEALTH IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF HEARST MAGAZINES, INC.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS BY POSTAL MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL OR EXACT COPY TO: WOMEN'S HEALTH, MAIL PREFERENCE CENTER, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500.

FOR LICENSING AND REPRINTS CONTACT WYNDELL HAMILTON AT WRIGHT'S MEDIA, 281-419-5725 X152, WHAMILTON@WRIGHTSMEDIA.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2024 HEARST MAGAZINES, INC. WOMEN'S HEALTH IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF HEARST MAGAZINES, INC.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS BY POSTAL MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL OR EXACT COPY TO: WOMEN'S HEALTH, MAIL PREFERENCE CENTER, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500.

FOR LICENSING AND REPRINTS CONTACT WYNDELL HAMILTON AT WRIGHT'S MEDIA, 281-419-5725 X152, WHAMILTON@WRIGHTSMEDIA.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2024 HEARST MAGAZINES, INC. WOMEN'S HEALTH IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF HEARST MAGAZINES, INC.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS BY POSTAL MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL OR EXACT COPY TO: WOMEN'S HEALTH, MAIL PREFERENCE CENTER, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500.

FOR LICENSING AND REPRINTS CONTACT WYNDELL HAMILTON AT WRIGHT'S MEDIA, 281-419-5725 X152, WHAMILTON@WRIGHTSMEDIA.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2024 HEARST MAGAZINES, INC. WOMEN'S HEALTH IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF HEARST MAGAZINES, INC.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE MAKE OUR SUBSCRIBER LIST AVAILABLE TO COMPANIES THAT SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BY MAIL THAT WE BELIEVE WOULD INTEREST OUR READERS. IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECEIVE SUCH MAILINGS BY POSTAL MAIL, PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT MAILING LABEL OR EXACT COPY TO: WOMEN'S HEALTH, MAIL PREFERENCE CENTER, P.O. BOX 6000, HARLAN, IA 51593-1500.



SKECHERS HANDS FREE **Slip-ins**



AVAILABLE FOR
MEN & WOMEN

No Bending Over.

No Touching Shoes.

Just Step In & Go.

**HANDS FREE,
JUST STEP IN & GO**

Introducing new Skechers Hands Free Slip-ins®. Putting on your shoes has never been easier. No Bending over. No pulling them on. Just Step In & Go.

Exclusive Heel Pillow™ holds your foot securely in place!



**NO MORE
BENDING**



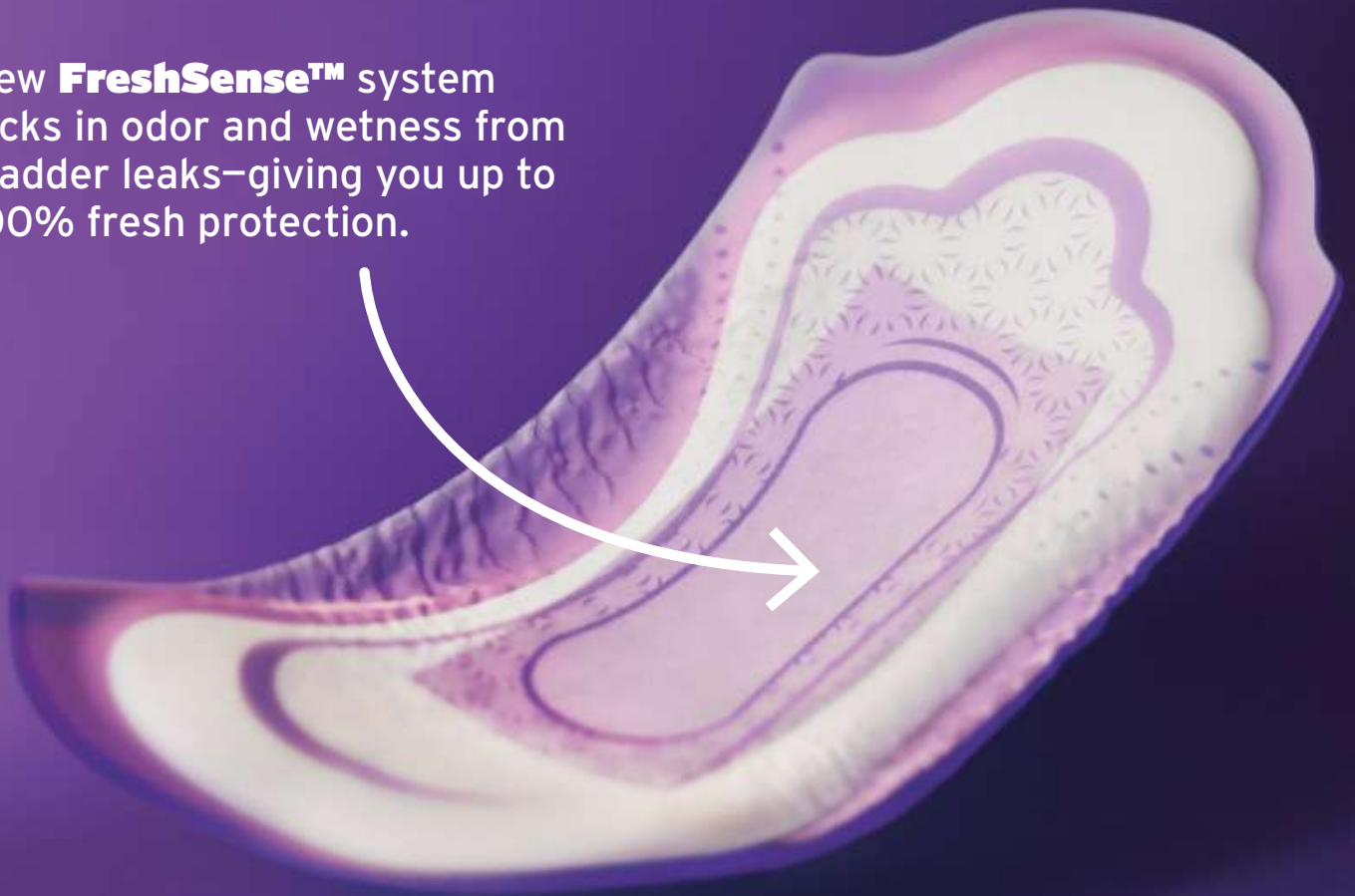
LEARN MORE

**NEVER HAVE TO TOUCH
YOUR SHOES AGAIN™**

skechers.com

LEAKS HAPPEN. ODOR SHOULDN'T.

New **FreshSense™** system
locks in odor and wetness from
bladder leaks—giving you up to
100% fresh protection.

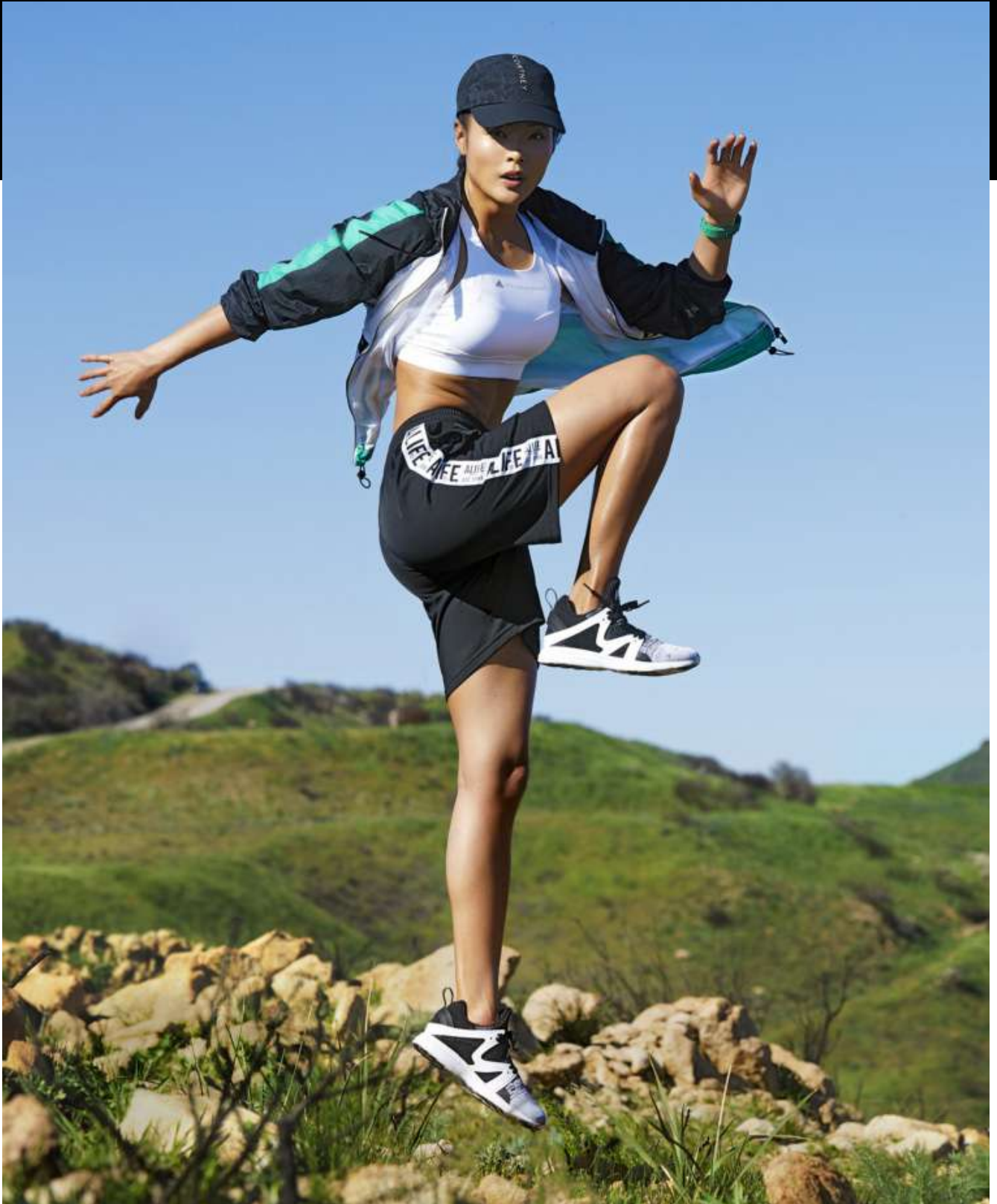


IT TAKES *Poise*



the warmup

Supercharge
your life with
inspiration and
intel from the
best experts and
WH editors.

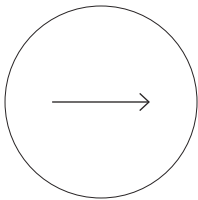


Scent Solutions

What was once a taboo subject—body odor—is now a convo more and more people are happily having.

By **Pia Velasco**

Photographed by **Lee Morgan**



Like everyone, I have a busy schedule, and sometimes I don't have time for a full workout. So, I try to squeeze in activity whenever possible, and one of my tricks is to bike everywhere—to work, to dates, to drinks with friends. Problem is, I don't want to arrive smelly to a, say, nice dinner. I needed a way to freshen up. That's when I discovered full-body deos.

Most of us are familiar with the funk of BO, which happens when sweat interacts with bacteria on our skin, triggering a reaction that causes odor. But perspiration isn't isolated to the armpits; just 2 percent of our body's sweat glands are located in that area. In fact, research shows that we have three types of sweat glands—eccrine, apocrine, and apoeccrine. They're all over, including on the back, chest, feet, forehead, inner thighs, and genitals. And odor solutions for those areas are becoming more plentiful.

Birth of a Trend

For decades, people have created their own DIY concoctions to tackle body stink, using items like baby powder, coconut oil, and even lemon juice. "Talc, clays, baking soda, and tapioca starch work to absorb sweat, preventing wetness and odor," says Ron Robinson, a cosmetic chemist and founder of the skin-care brand BeautyStat.

But recently, some of these remedies have come under fire, with major class-action lawsuits alleging that talc-containing products are filled with known carcinogens such as asbestos. Scary health concerns aside, simply figuring out the right balance of ingredients can be tricky to do in your kitchen anyway. So, a slew of brands have launched ready-to-use formulas.

You might've seen one of the biggies on TV or social media recently. We're talking about Lume—the brand that popularized the idea of full-body deodorants in 2017.

Founder Shannon Klingman, MD, an ob-gyn, created Lume's most famous product, the Whole-Body Deodorant, to tackle a problem that, at the time, had a dearth of easy fixes. The formula, with tapioca starch and mandelic acid, works to acidify skin's pH, preventing bacteria from proliferating and causing odor.

Dr. Klingman recommends rubbing a pea-size amount ("a little goes a long way," she says) into smelly parts, including the under-boob area, thigh folds, and underneath the butt cheeks. Since its launch, Lume has expanded its portfolio to include stick deodorants, wipes, body creams, body washes, and acidified cleansing bars that are pH-optimized to control odor.

Odor Goes Mainstream

Thanks to the viral success of Lume, topics that were once



considered off-limits for polite conversation—genital odor, under-boob sweat—started lighting up social media. Videos on TikTok for #fullbodydeodorants have more than 23 million views, and in the U.S., searches for body deodorant have increased over 70 percent in recent months.

"Destigmatizing these subjects is the way of the future," says shape-positivity advocate Katie Sturino, whose own body-care brand, MegaBabe, has a suite of head-to-



So, why do we sweat? It's mostly about thermo-regulation—our body's way of cooling us down.

toe odor- and sweat-fighting products, including the viral Magic Powder, a cornstarch-based lotion deodorant.

Major mass-market players are getting in on the action as well: 15 percent of Americans are estimated to be looking for a full-body odor solution, according to a national survey from Unilever (brands include Dove, St. Ives, and Vaseline). This year, Unilever brands like SheaMoisture and Dove launched whole-body deodor-

ant creams and sticks, and another popular brand, Native, now also has an entire collection of full-body deodorants, which includes sprays and sticks.

There are now also formulas for every need and preference: Secret's Whole Body Deodorant Spray, for example, helps access hard-to-reach areas like the back and addresses large areas, skin folds, and feet. Foot-care brand Dr. Scholl's recently introduced its own Foot Odor Probiotic Spray, which helps

rebalance bacteria and neutralize smells. Deodorant brand Ban introduced an ingenious twofer, the Thigh & Body Rub Remedy Anti-Friction Stick, to address painful chafing *and* tackle odor. "For some patients, there was a hole in the market for something that can treat these types of full-body issues—they just didn't feel comfortable using their regular underarm deodorant in other areas," says Michelle Henry, MD, a dermatologist in New York City.

Elevating the Ordinary

As the trend evolves, the offerings get even more sophisticated. AKT London—a company that was founded by two professional West End performers in the U.K. who were looking for a natural deodorant that performed—recently introduced Deodorant Balms that offer an elevated olfactory experience.

They teamed up with Sozio, a French fragrance house that specializes in clean and natural perfume, to create each of its scents: Orange Grove blends petit-grain, mandarin, and neroli for an uplifting experience; After Thunder combines cedar, eucalyptus, and orange for a refreshing and grounding effect; The Onsen mixes notes of vetiver, lavender, and citrus to soothe the mind; Halcyon Summers transports you to an Italian villa in the summer thanks to notes of mint, pomelo, and tomato vine; and lastly, Columbia Road brings users to a floral market nestled in the midst of a budding city with notes of plant stems, amber, and violet leaf. Each feels less like a deodorant and more like an expensive perfume.

Fur is yet another brand aiming to lift the experience of using deodorant, but with a one-two punch. The company, which was founded to create luxurious pubic hair products, just unveiled its new Ingrown Deodorant, addressing two concerns simultaneously: body odor (neutralized through



In addition to cooling us down, sweat is a stress response. And that kind of perspiration emits the stinkiest smell.

a combination of probiotics and essential oils) and ingrown hairs (whose formation is prevented and reduced with mildly exfoliating salicylic acid). It's marketed for underarm use, but the product was gynecologist-tested and proven to be safe below the belt (ingrowns happen there too).

Bottom Lines

Products designed to minimize odor all over are a no-brainer for women who hit the gym, track, or

athletic field regularly, like me. I may not be biking to work every day anymore, but my active lifestyle is still in full swing.

Whole-body deodorants help me cover my bases from head to toe, and I love that these products offer a pleasing olfactory experience and are easy to stash in my backpack or gym bag. My overall takeaway is that sweat is normal. Body odor is normal. But feeling helpless or embarrassed about them no longer has to be normal.

Deodorant vs. Antiperspirant: What's the Difference?

Simply put, deodorants work to neutralize body odor, while antiperspirants reduce perspiration with ingredients such as aluminum salts. You may have heard some chatter about potential health risks, but experts don't want you to worry. "Some research has found aluminum present in breast tumors, but there's no proof the aluminum is coming from antiperspirant use," Dr. Henry says. Others claim it's unsafe to block sweat, which prevents our body from purging "toxins." Also misleading: "We have 2 million to 4 million sweat glands on our bodies, so blocking 1 or 2 percent of them is insignificant," says Dr. Henry. "And our body processes potential toxins in the liver and kidneys, not via sweating."

19,000 aha moments is a lot.



That's also the number of tests we do every month to ensure you get the highest quality supplements available, like our Magtein® for cognitive support.*

19,000 reasons to feel good spending less.



Shower Power

How one writer improved her mental health by connecting with her body

By **Zoe Weiner**

t

There are many details about my past that are fuzzy now, but certain memories are clear as day.

I remember the girl who called me fat in the first grade. I remember the time my mom put me on a soup-only diet after I'd gained weight at summer camp. (I was 11.) And I remember the time a guy I'd been dating broke up with me during the darkest moments of my

eating disorder because he "wasn't attracted to me anymore." To this day, a picture I'd seen in a magazine of Jessica Simpson in her Daisy Dukes still haunts me. None of these memories were good for my body image.

For nearly two decades, no matter what I put my body through—which could best be described as a cycle of starving, overexercising, recovering, and repeating—I struggled to love what I saw in the mirror. At some point, I began to just accept that my body and I would never get along. Like a bad roommate, she was someone I was going to have to learn to live with.

Unknowingly at the time, I was practicing mindful body-care, and this type of nonsexual self-touch can be a powerful tool in healing a negative self-image.

But then the 2020 lockdown happened. I was sharing a small space with a partner, and the only me-time I got was the 10 minutes I spent in the shower. I began to cherish those moments of silence, and pretty soon, a quick lather-and-rinse transformed into a multistep process with two types of exfoliation and layers of lotion.

And what began as a way for me to get some much-needed space transformed into something else. All that time slathering and scrubbing forced me to connect to my body in a way that felt foreign to me. Exfoliating my legs gave me a chance to feel the muscles I'd built up from years as a runner. Moisturizing my stomach connected me to a part of my body I'd always done my best to avoid touching.

After a while, the fact that my thighs touched or my high school jeans were three sizes too small just didn't feel all that important anymore. Instead of standing in the shower criticizing all my naked bits and bobs, I was starting to appreciate them.

Regimen With Benefits

Unknowingly at the time, I was practicing mindful body care, and this type of nonsexual self-touch can be a powerful tool in healing a negative self-image, experts say. "It can be healing to think of yourself as the caretaker of your body and engage in practices that respect it," Bent, LMFT, a clinical counselor in California who specializes in eating disorders. "Self-massage, for example, is a beautiful way to nourish the body in a soothing way."

These rituals can be particularly impactful for people who, like me, have struggled with disordered eating. "It's about enhancing awareness of your physical being," says Rachel Goldberg, LMFT, founder of Rachel Goldberg Therapy, who explains that using touch to tune in

to bodily sensations helps you differentiate a true need from a fleeting feeling. This improves your relationship with food by helping you to distinguish between hunger and emotional eating. "You may also learn to appreciate parts of your body you'd previously thought poorly of," she says.

Stream of Consciousness

Even those who aren't struggling with body dysmorphia can benefit from relishing their shower routine, which can be a form of mindfulness meditation. Use that time—which you've already carved out of your schedule—as a consistent and deliberate opportunity to quiet your mind by connecting to the present. "It can be a powerful tool for emotional regulation, allowing you to ground yourself when you're feeling overwhelmed," says Goldberg.

It's no surprise, then, that brands have begun developing products that make shower time feel as peaceful and intentional as possible. Aromatherapy-infused offerings such as Tatcha's Forest Awakening line or By Rosie Jane's Calm The F*ck Down body wash relieve stress via scent. Dove now has a range of body products—from creamy mousses and gentle serum-infused cream washes to gritty scrubs—with textures that amp up the sensorial experience.

Love, From Head to Toe

Four years have gone by since I first started taking these mindful showers, and I haven't skipped a day.

Every night before bed, I spend 20 minutes treating myself to a full-blown body-care routine. I have a fancy Sprig by Kohler showerhead, which pairs with infusion pods that fill the steam in my shower with scent. I'll choose among Focus, Sleep, Shield, and Recharge.

Then I lather up with a hydrating body wash. I've been loving the L'Occitane Almond Shower Oil—its transformation from silky oil to frothy lather is really satisfying, and it feels supersoft on my skin. Next, it's a scrub with Ouai's Scalp & Body Scrub, which has a pretty sparkle and is just gritty enough to cleanse my skin without feeling too aggressive. Some nights I'll finish things up with a shave using BIC's Soleil Smooth Scented Razor, which has a super-subtle lavender scent that give my shower one last relaxing touch.

Once the water is turned off, I apply lotion while I'm still in the shower, because dermatologists have told me that it works better when the skin is wet. I massage myself from head to toe with Sailtair's Pink Beach Body Lotion. Some nights, I'll swap in the Versed Advanced Retinol Body Butter, which has a beautiful texture that melts into skin.

I can't pretend that this practice has solved *all* my problems, but spending a few intentional minutes with my body every day has definitely changed our relationship for the better. Most days, I love her a whole lot more than I did before. And even in those moments I don't—she's still someone I want to hang out with.



1 Spot Check
In 15 shades, this portable complexion perfecter can be dabbed anywhere you need coverage (over a pimple, under the eyes). **Well People Supernatural Complexion Stick**, \$25, amazon.com



2 Power Gel
A peptide serum that feels so wonderfully hydrating, you may not realize it has serious smoothing and tightening effects. **Lumene Nordic Bloom Firming Serum**, \$36, amazon.com

"My skin was more luminous and plump after a month of use. It's also nongreasy, which is a huge plus."
Brian Underwood, beauty director

"This moisturizes just as well as thicker body butters and has a light citrus scent that doesn't overpower."
Danielle Jackson, senior beauty editor



3 Head-to-Toe Hero
Body lotion can be a drag to apply—the greasiness, the waiting for it to seep in—but this serum-like formula is a lightweight, fast-absorbing dream. **Vaseline Pro VitaB3 Serum-Burst Lotion in Supple & Soft**, \$8, at drugstores



4 Brilliant Buy
Everything you'd want in an eye cream—vit C to brighten, caffeine to tighten, aloe to soothe—at an awesome price. **Olay Super Eyes Daily Eye Serum**, \$35, olay.com

Fresh Starts

The *WH* team selected and sweat-tested the best products for your active lifestyle.

Photographed by **Joe Lingeman**



5 Tech Talk
Meet our new desk essential: The contoured tip of this battery-powered device gets warm or cool at the press of a button, making it perfect for gliding over puffy undereyes that need a midday pick-me-up. **Therabody TheraFace Depuffing Wand**, \$149, sephora.com



HIGHEST PROTEIN NUT

GET CRACKIN' WITH PROTEIN POWER.
With all nine essential amino acids and six grams of protein in every 1oz. serving, Wonderful Pistachios is the go-to snack to get you over the finish line.



*Highest-protein nut, based on % DV. Pistachios have 12% DV.

© 2023 Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds LLC. All Rights Reserved. WONDERFUL, GET CRACKIN', PLANT PROTEIN, the Package Design, and accompanying logos are trademarks of Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds LLC or its affiliates. WP230622-06

Can You Be a Born Athlete?

WH investigates whether fitness performance just runs in your genes or if it's nurtured as you age.

By **Erin Strout**

the 2024 U.S. Olympic Swimming Trials in June was a banger for 21-year-old Gretchen Walsh. Not only did she

qualify for her first Olympic team, but she set a world record in the 100m butterfly after clocking 55.18 seconds in the event. But those two crowning achievements were only part of her big sports dreams. In order for Walsh to consider it a complete success, her older sister, Alex, also needed to secure her own spot on Team USA.

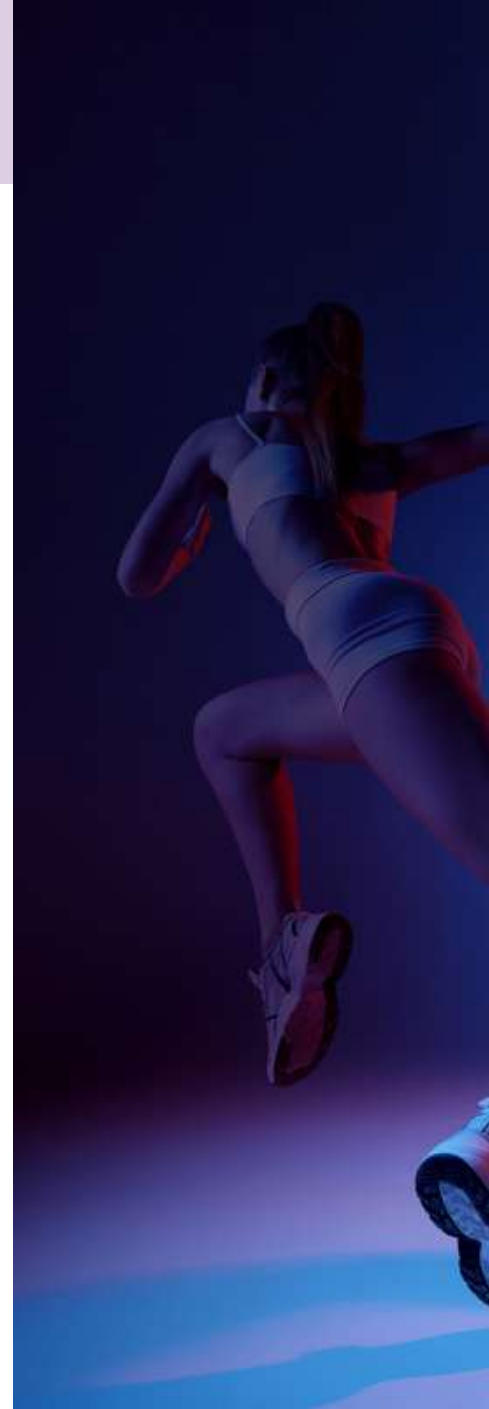
"I'm just thinking to myself, *I need to go to Paris*," Alex, 23, says, reflecting on the week that passed between Gretchen's competition at the swim trials and her own. "It definitely made me work harder because I wanted to be able to do it for her and for myself."

Six days later, Alex held up her end of the deal, taking second place in the 200m individual medley to earn her second trip to the Olympics (she previously won silver at the 2020 Tokyo Games in the same event). It was a huge sigh of relief for the whole family. Gretchen went on to win two gold medals and two silver medals in Paris. Alex had a tougher time, with a disqualifica-

tion for not completing the backstroke relay section fully on her back. But the sisters had achieved their ultimate goal: "We've always had this goal of going to the Olympics together," Alex says.

The Walshes were part of a unique group competing at the 2024 Summer Olympics—one of at least six sets of siblings who represented Team USA together, including 24-year-old twins Annie and Kerry Xu, who competed in women's doubles badminton, and track and field athletes Juliette and Isabella (Bella) Whittaker (20 and 22, respectively). Reaching the pinnacle of your sport is certainly an impressive feat. But getting to do it alongside your sister? Beyond special.

When we think of high-achieving athletic siblings, some notable names inevitably pop into our brains. Tennis aces Venus and Serena Williams, for starters; basketball greats Nneka and Chiney Ogumike; competitive water polo players Ashleigh and Chelsea Johnson; Sam and Kristie Mewis of soccer stardom—the list goes on and on. And it leads us to the obvious question: Are the world's best athletes just born great? Or do they achieve greatness because of a shared environment that cultivates and propels them forward?



Maybe They're Born With It

● ● ● Science hasn't quite cracked the nature-versus-nurture code, but as more experts study the families who seem to thrive in sports, interesting patterns emerge. Some research has revealed purely genetic advantages leading to sports greatness while other studies show how environment can play an outsized part in future success.

For starters, at least 251 genetic markers are linked to sport traits such as endurance, power, or strength, according to a recent



paper in the journal *Genes*. However, only 128 of those markers have been identified in two or more studies, and some may have also been false positives. And two genes already linked to elite athletic performance didn't have strong enough associations to actually predict raw sports talent, per a review in *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*.

"Genetics gives you the potential and a ceiling. The environment allows you to explore and see how close to that ceiling you can get," says Steve Magness, who studies, coaches, and writes about mental skills and high performance.

Ingredients for Success



Physical factors, parenting styles, and proximity to quality coaching all play a part. Of course, some physical characteristics that help sports performance are ones we're just born with: height, optimal body composition, the right muscle fiber, or high aerobic capacity.

Gretchen Walsh knows that without her self-described big hands and feet, her 6'1" frame, and her 6'4" wingspan, she probably wouldn't be a medal contender in the pool. She can thank her parents,

Robert Walsh, who was a basketball player in his youth, and Glynis Walsh, who was a competitive swimmer at Boston College, for these athletic attributes. "I literally think I was built to be a swimmer," Gretchen says.

However, you can have all the "perfect" physical traits for any given sport, but if you don't have the desire, support, or resources to pursue that activity, those genetic gifts won't matter. Gretchen knows this well. She credits her parents for another gift that aided her athletic greatness: "I really think it was our parents who instilled the work ethic. And as the younger sister, I got to follow in Alex's footsteps. I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for the situation I was in."

It helps to be born lucky in sports, writes A. Mark Williams, PhD, a professor of sport and exercise science at Manchester Metropolitan University in England and author of *The Best: How Elite Athletes Are Made*. By that, he's referring to serendipitous factors related to the environment you live in, including proximity to quality coaches and facilities, peers to train and compete with, and parents or caregivers who emotionally and financially support participation.

Even then, it's all a delicate balance—it's just as important that parents not get too "hands-on" in their child's athletic endeavors. "Excessive parental pressure and expectations have been linked with higher anxiety, reduced self-esteem and self-confidence in young athletes, and even burnout and dropout," Williams writes.

The Whittaker sisters—Bella, a member of Team USA's 4 x 400m relay pool, and Juliette, competing in the 800m in Paris—say they always felt they had a choice in their involvement in sports growing up. Their mother and father had been competitive track athletes at Georgetown University, but the

sisters didn't take up running until they were in high school. As younger children, they had always been competitive swimmers.

"We really found running on our own, which I think was cool and special," Juliette says, reflecting on her career. "And I think that's why we've had so much success in it."

And although the Whittaker household has always been

competitive, whether it's board games or sprint races on the beach, their wins or losses on the track never dictated the general household mood. "Our parents never harped on medals or records or made it a bigger deal than it had to be," Juliette says. Bella adds, "We just didn't make a big deal of certain outcomes....They reminded us that struggles and failures are very temporary. They happen, but you can come back from them."

The Xu twins, Annie and Kerry, discovered badminton with little parental influence too. They enjoyed figure skating until they reached a level that would have required their parents to drive more than an hour each way to practice several times a week. They decided to look for an activity closer to home, dabbling in tennis, table

tennis, and badminton—none of which anybody in their immediate family had ever played.

"Our parents had a very open mindset. They wanted us to try things that we liked as children," Annie says. "Because of that supportive family environment, we could just try whatever we wanted, and if it worked out, it worked out."

The Power of Supportive Competition



Robin D. Taylor, PhD, an assistant professor in elite performance at Dublin City University in Ireland, has researched the role that siblings play in talent development. In his work, he has found that although such relationships are highly individual and variable, several different kinds of sibling interactions can help boost athletic performance.

In some relationships, siblings help each other deal with poor performances and tough setbacks, showing encouragement and empathy toward one another. And at other times, siblings benefit from the rivalry their athletics bring out—the competition can drive siblings to try to be better than each other, Taylor says. But not always. The type of aid and motivation siblings provide just depends on how the relationship forms—it's different for everyone and can also change over time.

The Walsh sisters have experienced both sides of the coin. When they were in high school, they were often lane leaders, swimming next to each other during practice. In one way, it made them training partners. But it also forced competition. If one was going faster than the other or didn't like the way the other started an interval, it created tension. But at home, when bickering ensued after a tough day at the pool, their parents just changed the subject—swimming was never a


At least 251 genetic markers are linked to sports traits like endurance, power, and strength.





Pairs Who Perform

More pro siblings who inspire us:

main topic of conversation at the dinner table, especially during times when the sisters felt less like teammates and more like rivals.

By the time Gretchen followed Alex to the University of Virginia, they no longer competed in the same events, which alleviated any sports-related tension. In fact, they were in different training groups on their college team. “When you’re not swimming and racing each other all the time, it’s way easier just to always be in the other one’s corner,” Alex says. “We’re racing the best in the world, so now is the time where we always have to be supporting each other no matter what.”

Similarly, the Whittakers mostly specialized in different distances on the track, which kept peace in the family, though Bella remembers a time early on when Juliette beat her at a high school cross-country race. “I was so mad because I was like, *This is my younger sister; she can’t beat me like this,*” says Bella, who’s now a sprinter. “But fast-forward, and now we know that cross-country was not meant for me.”

Younger siblings actually may have an advantage over older siblings in gaining athletic performance, research shows. The older person in the relationship tends to pave the way, then they help their siblings develop skills more quickly and at an earlier age. Younger siblings can also watch the older ones, imitate them, or adapt their game based on what they see.

All in the Family



The incredible feats of strength and athleticism on full display in Paris this past summer make one thing very clear: An immeasurable number of variables had to come together for each of the athletes to reach the pinnacle of success in their sports.

“I don’t think people appreciate how hard it is to navigate getting to that level,” Magness says. “So few [athletes] make it because you need all these ducks in a row and a perfect storm. Even more so when you’re talking about multiple family members. It’s pretty mind-blowing to think about.”

Now that Juliette Whittaker is attending Stanford University and Bella has graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, the opportunities to see each other at track competitions are few—and have become that much more cherished. So, this summer, they requested to be roommates in the Olympic Village. Having shared a bedroom growing up, they thought the experience would be a lot like all the nights they spent together before big meets in high school. “How great is it to be able to do this with someone so special to you?” Bella says.

No doubt the Walsh sisters didn’t take a second of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for granted. But ask them what exactly made them two of the best swimmers in the world? Beyond their years of endless training, they can’t say exactly whether nature or nurture is the magic ingredient to their success.

“We both have physical characteristics that help us move through the water as fast as we do. But it’s also our circumstance of being in a family that loves us and pushes us to be our best,” Alex says. “I can see both. I can’t say one or the other.”

Take heart. The sources of prowess and glory have long been shrouded in mystery. As Shakespeare wrote in *Twelfth Night*: “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” And if you throw a winning combination of genes into the mix, you might find that you have yourself an elite athlete. Or two.



Nneka and Chiney Ogwumike
BASKETBALL

Chiney started playing at age 9; Nneka soon followed her lead.



Nelly and Jessica Korda
GOLF

Nelly holds the world No. 1 spot. Jessica has won six LPGA tournaments.



Alyssa and Gisele Thompson
SOCCER

The sisters, who recently went pro, inked their first Nike NIL deal in high school.

Pushup to Side Plank

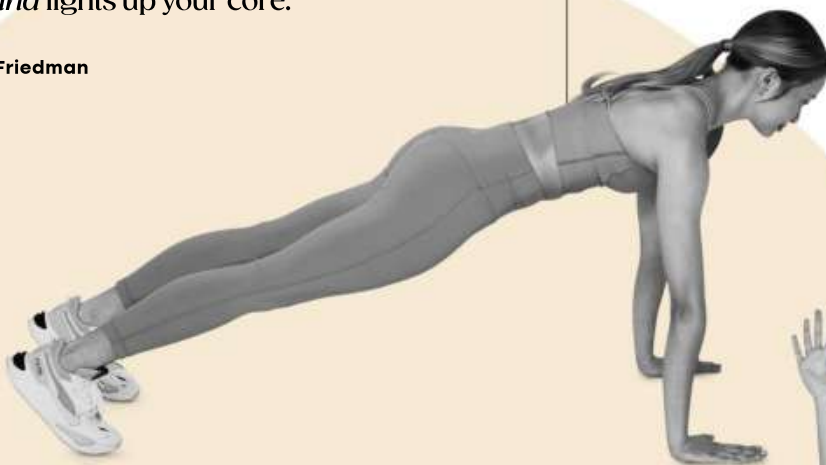
This multi-plane variation boosts upper-body strength and coordination, improves shoulder stability, *and* lights up your core.

By **Talene Appleton**

Photographed by **Philip Friedman**

STEP 1

Begin in a high plank with hands shoulder-width apart, feet hip-width, and core engaged.



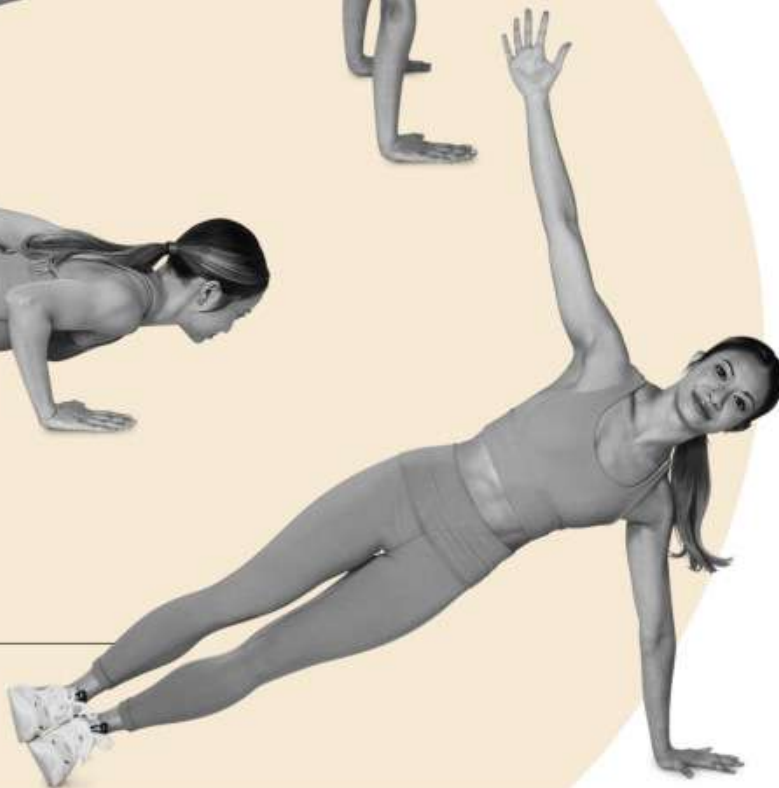
STEP 2

With control, lower down to perform a pushup, keeping core and legs activated.



STEP 3

Rotate to the right in a side plank, reach right arm to ceiling, and stack feet. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds. That's 1 rep.



Tone It Down

Both phases of this move can be done from your knees instead of your toes, says Colette Nguyen, CPT, a personal trainer and trainer at Soho Strength Lab. (Nguyen is also demonstrating the moves.)

KEEP FORM IN CHECK by ensuring hips are lifted and stable. Don't let them drop or over-rotate, especially in the side plank. This will maximize the engagement of your core and help you maintain balance.

WORK IT IN during bodyweight HIIT workouts, in core-focused sessions, or on upper body days. Perform 2 to 4 sets of 8 to 12 reps, alternating sides, and resting for 30 to 60 seconds between sets.

GLAD STRENGTH

FEATURING PINE-SOL FRESHNESS



It's better than all good **GLAD**

Healthy Eats, Delivered

It might be possible to say goodbye to grocery stores forever. But should you?

By **Trish Clasen Marsanico**
Photographed by **Joe Lingeman**

If food shopping always falls to the bottom of your want-to-do list, good news: It's now easier than ever to avoid the supermarket without giving up healthy eating or spending *all* of your funds on takeout. But that wasn't always the case; the market has shifted drastically only in the past five years.

The first online grocery delivery service, Peapod, launched in 1989. (Yep, during the days of dial-up Internet and floppy disks!) And while people raved about the convenience of buying groceries through a computer, and Peapod made over 29 million deliveries, and dozens of competitors like Instacart, Imperfect Foods, and FreshDirect began entering the scene, the majority of food purchases continued to happen IRL. (Case in point: In 2019, only 3 percent of grocery shopping occurred online, according to Bain & Company research.) It wasn't until the pandemic that e-commerce, particularly for food, accelerated at an unprecedented pace. Online



95.5%
Likelihood that shoppers with children will buy groceries online on a monthly basis

Source: Capital One Shopping Research

grocery sales jumped by \$34 billion in 2020, according to the FDA.

Today, many folks have returned to buying groceries at physical stores. But they haven't ditched the digital habit completely: Nearly 20 percent of U.S. shoppers bought groceries online in 2022, according to a USDA survey. Overall spending per order across delivery, pickup, and ship-to-home grocery services rose by almost 4 percent from July 2023 to July 2024, reported a grocery business analytics firm. And nationwide, grocery e-commerce revenue is expected to surpass \$422 billion by 2028, per Statista.

It must be noted that the environmental impact of online shopping is something to think about (see "Digital Downside," below). But these grocery services will likely continue to thrive for a few modern reasons.

Can't-Beat Accessibility

Groceries dropped at your doorstep means no heavy bags to carry or long distances to drive (or walk). That's a huge win, especially for individuals dealing with disabilities, mobility challenges, or a lack of transportation options. And! All types of foods have broadened their reach throughout the country. For example, Midwesterners can get sushi-grade salmon fillets, courtesy of the Honolulu Fish Company. And companies like Weee!, an online Asian food store, and Yummy Bazaar, a global market, make it



easier than ever to source specific hard-to-come-by ingredients.

Health Efficiency

Sixty-six percent of U.S. shoppers cited time savings as the top reason to buy groceries online, according to a PowerReviews survey. Digital shopping is intrinsically faster than trekking to a physical store. Some sites even provide a personalized shopping experience, so you can log on and reorder recently purchased goods—all shown in one convenient place. There's also the health factor: "Ordering groceries online can be a game changer for busy moms and families. It not only helps you plan nutritious meals in advance but allows you to easily compare labels and ingredients," says Valerie Agyeman, RDN, dietitian and podcast host of *Flourish Heights*.

"This makes healthier choices simpler and more convenient, without the stress of navigating a crowded store."

Budget Benefits

Although delivery fees, service charges, and tips can level up costs, you may end up *saving* money. Cutting your grocery bill is a li'l bit easier when you're not facing temptation at every corner (stores are literally designed to convince us to buy everything, from brightly colored boxes of cereal that are "on sale" to freshly baked goods that smell too good to pass up). Placing a food order from your couch also helps cut down on purchasing duplicate ingredients. Not sure if you already have eggs in your fridge? Check! Do you have enough black beans for this recipe? Confirmed.



Digital Downside

Shopping on the interwebz has its negatives. While, yes, you can cut costs on your bill, there are also tips and fees you wouldn't otherwise have had to pay. And there are pretty big environmental factors to consider. While shopping local is seen by many as a sustainable choice, some companies ship "local" products across the planet (think: vinegars and oils from Europe, steaks from Australia). Not to mention the fact that many mail-order meats and seafood services arrive in nonrecyclable foam packaging. And, of course, there is the produce piece of the puzzle. Without shopping in person, you can't choose the specific avocado, banana, or tomato that ends up in your cart, which means you may receive something riper, greener, or firmer than you want. This may be what is leading people to purchase fewer fruits and veg via these services: Instacart baskets contained about 13 percent fewer fresh vegetables than carts at the brick-and-mortar stores, according to a study that leveraged machine-learning algorithms to evaluate shopper behavior.

Smart Strategies

Here are the best tips from the *WH* Test Kitchen (based on countless online grocery experiences!) to make the most of virtual services.

SIZE 'EM UP Check the quantity and unit size listed on the site to avoid disappointment when groceries arrive. Sometimes the image in your mind and the actual package size don't align...especially with shrinkflation (i.e., manufacturers reducing packaging without lowering prices).

CHOOSE PRODUCE WISELY Skip anything too fussy—a peach that's best at peak ripeness or a banana you'd want in just the right shade of yellow—and instead opt for sturdier squashes, heads of cabbage, or broccoli. Or go with a low-maintenance veg you're planning to chop and cook anyway.

DIVE INTO RESEARCH Most sites include ingredient and nutrition info for packaged goods, though there is no industry standard yet, per the FDA. You can also explore reviews, learn about sourcing, and look into the values of the company before making purchases.

USE A FILTER Some sites give the option to shop through a health-focused lens and auto-filter results, so you can avoid certain allergens and/or see only foods that fit within certain dietary parameters—dairy-free, gluten-free, vegan, keto, paleo, you name it.

SET YOUR SUBSTITUTES With grocery pickup and same-day shipping, it's hard to guarantee that all the goods will still be available by the time your shopper starts on your order. Don't settle for default replacements; update your settings to best match how you'd personally

deal with out-of-stock items, and/or switch substitutions off.

INSPECT AND SNAP PICS

When the goods arrive, take a few minutes to closely look over the contents of each box or bag. See anything smashed or cracked? Take a picture. Perishable items don't feel cold? Raise a flag. Something missing? Double-check you didn't get charged for it. Report any issues to the customer satisfaction team right away. Most services will offer a refund or discount if you alert them to issues upon delivery.



Ways to Shop

1

Grocery 2.0

Pick the goods you want, opt for pickup or same-day delivery, and let someone else handle the actual shopping. Major players like Whole Foods, Kroger, and Walmart offer this service directly, whereas Instacart gives you the option to choose from a wider range of nearby stores.

2

Postal Pick

Mail-order meat and seafood subscriptions and online-exclusive grocers provide an option for people who want food (wild game meats, butcher-quality steaks, pantry staples, etc.) delivered but are willing to wait a few days—and don't mind shopping from multiple retailers.

3

Flash Finds

A few apps replicate the experience of "browsing" the aisles by featuring products for a limited time. Martie rotates its stock of discounted items based on what surplus inventory is available. Meanwhile, Misfits Market touts tons of weekly "rescued" food discoveries.



MAKE THE
holidays
MEMORABLE

This Thanksgiving, make every bite mouthwatering with McCormick Turkey Gravy. Its smooth richness and perfect blend of spices will have everyone racing to the table, ready to dig in.



Find more recipes





Tastefuls™ Purées

Feed as a
Snack,
Topper, or
Treat

Made to please,
no matter how
you squeeze.



One Taste Is All It Takes™

Fuel / You've Got Mail

90%
of online grocery
shoppers read
reviews at least
occasionally.

Source: 2022 Power
Reviews Study



Price Check

Splurging for a
subscription can lead to
savings in the long run.
Find the right one
for you.

THRIVE MARKET
\$60/year



Offers healthy groceries and household goods, with the ability to filter via diet type, environmental impact, and certifications (e.g., Non-GMO Project). Membership includes access to site (and member-only prices) and free shipping on orders over \$49.

HIVE
\$60/year



Prioritizes goods produced according to organic and/or regenerative standards, plus minimal (if any) plastic packaging. Membership includes \$10 monthly credits and up to a 20 percent discount on all orders.

HUNGRYROOT
From \$70/week



Straddles the line between meal kit company and online grocer and accommodates a variety of diets. Membership includes personalized meal recs, access to grocery selection, and free shipping.

WHOLE FOODS DELIVERY
\$10 per delivery for Prime members; \$14 per delivery for non-Prime members



Extends its in-store inventory of vetted natural and organic foods to anyone, within certain regions. Membership includes unlimited free deliveries on orders over \$35.

VITACOST
\$0 (shipping fees vary)



Delivers a medley of nutritional supplements and shelf-stable foods from beloved brands (Primal Kitchen, Bob's Red Mill). Does not offer membership program; free shipping on orders over \$49.

***So tasty, we could
only call it one thing.***

**Feed the real meat and
natural ingredients cats love.**

- ✓ Wet and dry recipes with real meat first
- ✓ Natural cat food enhanced with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients
- ✓ A wide variety of flavors and textures
- ✓ Formulas for specific life stages and lifestyles



© Blue Buffalo Co., Ltd.



Tasteful[™]

ONE TASTE IS ALL IT TAKES[™]



Ensure[®] MAX PROTEIN

30g
PROTEIN

1g
SUGAR



Abbott
life. to the fullest.[®]

Use as part of a healthy diet.

©2024 Abbott 202418624/June 2024
LITHO IN USA

Fuel / Food in a Flash



Grain Gains

This cozy quinoa salad paired with juicy chicken thighs clocks nearly 50 grams of protein.

Recipe by **Kristina Kurek**
Photographed by **Joe Lingeman**

Mustardy Chicken With Quinoa-Cress Salad

TOTAL: 30 MIN. SERVES: 4

- 1 cup quinoa
- 8 oz brussels sprouts, shaved (about 4 cups)
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 6 small boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 1½ lbs), trimmed
- 1½ Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ¾ oz watercress (about 2 cups)
- ½ cup raw almonds, toasted and roughly chopped
- 3 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 3 Tbsp whole-milk Greek yogurt

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Bring 1½ cups water to a boil in medium saucepan. Stir in quinoa and return to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, 12 min. Remove from heat and let sit, covered, 5 min. more. Fluff quinoa with a fork, transfer to large bowl, and let cool.

2. While quinoa cooks, on large rimmed baking sheet, toss brussels sprouts and shallots with 2 Tbsp oil and ¼ tsp salt. Arrange in even layer and roast, stirring after 5 min., until tender and beginning to brown, 8 to 10 min. total.

3. Heat 1 Tbsp oil in large skillet on medium-high. Season chicken with ¼ tsp each salt and pepper and cook 6 min. Flip, reduce heat to medium, and cook until golden brown and just cooked through, 5 to 7 min. more. Transfer to cutting board and let rest 5 min. before slicing (reserve skillet).

4. Add brussels sprouts, lemon juice, and remaining 1 Tbsp oil to quinoa and toss to combine. Fold in watercress and almonds.

5. Return skillet to medium heat, add mustard and ½ cup water, and cook, whisking often, until simmering, about 30 sec. Remove from heat and whisk in yogurt and ¼ tsp pepper. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve with quinoa salad.

Per serving: About 633 cal, 32 g fat (5 g sat), 161 mg chol, 691 mg sodium, 40 g carb, 6 g fiber, 5 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 47 g pro

ENSURE[®] MAX PROTEIN

DON'T GIVE UP DELICIOUS FLAVOR TO GET GOOD NUTRITION

5g —
PROTEIN

40g —
SUGARS

FROZEN MOCHA
DRINK WITH
WHIPPED CREAM¹

VS

ENSURE[®]
MAX PROTEIN
CAFÉ MOCHA*

30g —
PROTEIN

1g —
SUGAR

COMFORT
FIBER
BLEND
INCLUDING A
PREBIOTIC

Ensure Max Protein has a **30g protein blend** to feed muscles for up to 7 hours, and is a good source of **25 vitamins & minerals**.

**SAVE \$4
INSTANTLY!**



Visit [Ensure.com/instantcoupon](https://www.ensure.com/instantcoupon)

AVAILABLE IN 7 DELICIOUS FLAVORS: Milk Chocolate, French Vanilla, Creamy Strawberry, Creamy Peach, Cherry Cheesecake, Milk Chocolate with Caffeine,* and Café Mocha*



Ensure
STRENGTH &
ENERGY

Use as part of a healthy diet.

Reference: 1. Nutrient data for 11-oz frozen mocha drink with whipped cream. FoodData Central, USDA website. <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>. Accessed November 24, 2021.

* Milk Chocolate with Caffeine and Café Mocha flavors have 100mg of caffeine, as much as an 8-oz cup of coffee.

© 2024 Abbott 202316817(2)/January 2024 LITHO IN USA

Abbott
life. to the fullest.®

What are your comfort food go-tos?

Take a peek into the fridges of WH's editors and advisors for their must-buys.



Oh Snap! Dilly Bites
Grab a bag of these snackable pickles. They pack the perfect juicy, tangy crunch for a mid-afternoon pick-me-up. —Charlotte Walsh, associate news editor



Justin's Dark Chocolate Crispy Peanut Butter Cups
The sweet-and-salty candy gets pops of texture from crunchy quinoa. Keep 'em in the fridge for a snappier chocolate bite. —Abby Shuster, senior digital designer



Kerrygold Salted Butter
Toasted sourdough that's slightly chewy, plus a good spread of high-quality European butter, is the best. —Kate Merker, chief food director



Alyssa's Healthy Oatmeal Bites
These cookies offer just the right amount of sweetness for a li'l treat. I love them chilled! —Tina Martinez, food producer



Daily Harvest White Bean and Spinach Pesto
Dump the frozen contents of this bag into a skillet whenever you want a cozy (gluten-free!) pasta dinner in under 10 minutes. —Trish Clasen Marsanico, deputy food editor



Clean-Out Challenge **SUPER STACK** Staring down a crisper full of broccoli? Take grilled cheese to the next-level: Roast florets, then sandwich between buttered rye bread and two slices of Swiss. Cook in a skillet until nice and melty. **EVERYTHING CROUTONS** Tear stale everything bagels into small pieces, drizzle with olive oil, and bake until golden and crunchy.



Make the holidays
**IRRESISTIBLY
DELICIOUS**

SCAN HERE




For Delicious
Recipe Inspiration
www.hellmanns.com/recipes



The Next Health Tech Revolution Is Here

From smart watches to tracking apps,
devices are providing valuable insights.

By **Amelia Harnish**



a After a busy morning in the pediatric cardiology clinic where she worked, Rachel Manalo, DO, was looking forward to her lunch break. It was a cherished few minutes to sit down and take a breath, which she relished at 18 weeks

pregnant. But that day, her body just wouldn't relax.

"My heart was beating superfast, even when I was resting and paying attention to my body," Dr. Manalo says. "I immediately went to the ECG feature."

Her heart rate was around 150 beats per minute—much higher than her resting heart rate during pregnancy of roughly 80 bpm, and closer to what she'd expect during a workout. As a cardiologist, Dr. Manalo knew this was unusual. Yet she also knew pregnancy can cause weird physical and biological changes. Shortly after, her heartbeat had slowed again. She asked a colleague to look at the Apple Watch data but didn't mention the incident to her ob-gyn. "The electrophysiologist I work with said to just continue monitoring it for now, because it only happened that one time," Dr. Manalo says. "I didn't want to worry my OB."

But as her pregnancy progressed, the episodes kept recurring. Each time, she recorded it on her watch. At 33 weeks, she often felt dizzy and out of breath. One night after work, her heart raced for hours. "It would race for a minute, then calm down, then race again," she says. "I could see the pattern forming on my watch."

Dr. Manalo went to a cardiologist who, using hospital instruments, made a diagnosis that aligned with Dr. Manalo's Apple Watch data: ventricular tachycardia (VT), an abnormal heart rhythm that occurs when the lower chambers of the heart beat too quickly. VT can result from a structural issue in the heart at birth, or it can arise when heart cells spontaneously start producing an electrical impulse they're not supposed to. It is also a rare but known pregnancy complication. If a fast VT heart rhythm goes on too long, it can impact the heart's ability to pump blood and oxygen to the rest of the body. Sustained VT (i.e., an episode lasting longer

than 30 seconds or requiring intervention within 30 seconds due to insufficient blood flow) can also lead to cardiac arrest.

Hoping rest and a new prescription medication would help, Dr. Manalo started maternity leave early. But a week later, the abnormal rhythm returned. "[My heart] raced for a full hour with no stopping. I had to go to the ER," she says.

Once again, she used her watch to capture the episode. When she got to the hospital, the doctors were able to act quickly. After they tried different medications to bring her heart rate to normal, her blood pressure started to drop (a sign that her life and her baby's life were in danger), and an emergency C-section was ordered. Her baby girl was born the next morning. "I could have developed cardiomyopathy [a disease in which the heart muscle can't pump blood effectively] or potentially died if I had not been able to closely monitor my heart rhythm during my symptoms," Dr. Manalo says. "The watch helped me tell that my palpitations weren't just anxiety but truly abnormal."

Dr. Manalo isn't the only pregnant woman whose wearable health tracker may have helped save her life. In December 2022, a pregnant woman in Costa Mesa, California, was wearing an Apple Watch when it warned her of a racing heartbeat that turned out to be the first signs of placental abruption, a rare pregnancy complication. In 2021, a pregnant Kentucky mom's Apple Watch alerted her to an abnormal heart rhythm that turned out to be a rare heart infection called myocarditis.

Other companies with wearable health trackers such as the Oura Ring, Garmin watches, and Whoop are also dialing into technological solutions to help women track biological data (and especially heart rates) during pregnancy.

Trackers Take Off

From watches and smart rings to health-tracking apps, Bluetooth-enabled blood pressure cuffs, and continuous glucose monitors that help with gestational diabetes, new tech products are becoming a key tool for managing preconception, pregnancy, and postpartum health. And experts are starting to pay more attention to the data these tools collect.

Sometimes it's the small physical and biological changes that might otherwise go undetected that affect a pregnant woman and her baby's health. For example, changes in sleep and activity could be used to predict preterm birth, one study found. Other small studies suggest that trackers can encourage physical activity and weight management in pregnant women, two factors that can reduce pregnancy complications.

Another paper found that pregnant women wearing a FitBit tracker increased their daily step count by 1,716 steps on average.

"Trackers can be immensely powerful tools to help us, in real time, take what we know about our environments, our sleep habits, our eating, our movement, and show how those inputs affect internal metrics, heart rate, blood glucose levels, and sleep metrics," says Christy Evans, MD, an ob-gyn at Almond ObGyn. "These tools are as powerful, if not more so, in pregnancy, when women may feel like the stakes are even higher."

Recently, ob-gyns have noticed more patients, like Dr. Manalo, using health trackers to monitor their heart during pregnancy and postpartum. It's a promising

trend, considering the latest numbers show that maternal mortality rates in the United States remain higher than in other industrialized countries. In 2022, roughly 22.3 women died per 100,000 live births, an increase from 17.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The trend is even worse for Black women, whose maternal mortality rate is nearly three times that of white women.

Right now, cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of maternal mortality in America, according to Jenny Y. Mei, MD, the ob-gyn at UCLA Health who treated Dr. Manalo after she arrived at the ER. "So, especially for patients who are at higher risk, technology could help address that component."

Dr. Mei coauthored a case study on Dr. Manalo's story that highlighted the need for larger-scale research on the topic. She is also involved in research looking at how remote blood pressure monitoring (in which patients upload their own blood pressure readings from an arm cuff into an app from home) can improve outcomes. "The ability to upload readings allows health-care providers to monitor blood pressure efficiently and more often. It's having an impact in reducing ER visits, which are a proxy for tracking complications," Dr. Mei explains.

This type of remote blood pressure monitoring may even help reduce racial disparities in maternal health. Black patients were less likely to discover their high blood pressure if they were in the group that checked blood pressure only in-office (so, they were more likely to detect their high BP in a remote situation), according to a study in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. In other research, Black women and other high-risk groups in a remote blood pressure monitoring program received medication adjustments that reduced ER visits.

Subtle changes in sleep and physical activity could be used to predict preterm birth, according to research.

1,716

more daily steps were taken by pregnant women who wore a tracker.

Source: BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Expanding Access

Some doctors think wearable health-tracking technology will be especially important as more women delay pregnancy past age 35 (when the risk of complications is greater) or start pregnancy with chronic conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure.

Amanda Horn, a nurse midwife at Holston Medical Group in Kingsport, Tennessee, says the vast majority of her patient population has an underlying disease, meaning there is greater risk for potential complications during pregnancy and postpartum. “Depending on your health status, you may need to be more vigilant, so I can see where more data and monitoring could potentially play a role,” she says.

For women at high risk for complications, normal prenatal visits may not always be enough to adequately monitor their health. “The traditional prenatal-care model means prenatal visits every four weeks for the first and second trimesters and every two weeks through most of the third trimester. That adds up to just 12 to 14 vital sign measurements,” says Santosh Pandipati, MD, a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Pediatrix Medical Group in Campbell, California. “There is a vast amount of missed data opportunity across the entire pregnancy and postpartum journey. More data means more

ability to obtain crucial insights, which in turn means more opportunity for early intervention.”

Additionally, a dearth of high-risk-pregnancy specialists in many parts of the country highlights other ways wearable health trackers could benefit women. “A lot of people are relying on virtual visits, and this type of remote monitoring could help patients who otherwise can’t do this kind of care in person,” says Dr. Mei. That might mean wearing a tracker that can monitor heart rate or using a Bluetooth-enabled blood pressure cuff or a continuous glucose monitor that can upload results to your doctor. That way, they can alert you to potential problems, provide advice, or direct you to the ER or other in-person care as needed.

However, doctors emphasize there is no replacement for being evaluated by a professional. “Whether or not you have a watch, when you have heart palpitations or otherwise don’t feel well, it’s important to bring it up with your doctor,” says Christine Greves, MD, an ob-gyn at Orlando Health Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies. And of course it will take more than a few Apple Watches to solve the maternal health crisis, which is compounded by socioeconomic factors like low income, housing and food insecurity, and substance use disorders. A larger overhaul of

the maternal health system (including increasing access to health care via free or low-cost care for pregnant women and moms) is needed to truly move the needle.

Reading Between the Lines

More info isn’t necessarily better. Heart palpitations are expected during pregnancy and, in most cases, very normal, says Horn. “I’ve had folks come to me with heart rate increases, and we end up doing significant interventions with seven-day monitors just to discover it is in fact benign. So, it can be a blessing and a curse.”

Conversely, Dr. Greves worries that patients will consider their watch’s assessment the be-all and end-all, and they could miss important clues as a result.

At the end of the day, you have to understand the limits of the data to use it most effectively. Doctors suggest leaning on tech to collect data—and nothing more. “It’s a helpful adjunct that can detect a trend,” Dr. Greves says. “At the same time, your body will send you signals if something is off. In a way, you have an internal ‘watch’ already.”

More research is needed to determine best practices for wearable pregnancy tech. It could be that only people with health risks such as obesity, cardiovascular or metabolic disease, or being 35 or older during a first pregnancy stand to benefit. Still, experts say being aware of symptoms and reporting concerns to your provider is always a good move. No one knows that better than Dr. Manalo, who underwent a procedure to correct her VT two months after giving birth.

Thanks to that early intervention and procedure, she’s now back at work and chasing after a healthy toddler at home. And to this day, she credits her Apple Watch with helping to save her life.



Why Is MS Increasing Among Women?

For women, finding an answer is becoming more urgent by the day.

By **Emily Abbate**

“It all looks normal,” Rebeckah Price’s first optometrist told her on January 3, 2023. Inside the small, sterile room, the then 46-year-old yoga teacher and single mother of three was hunting for answers after the vision in her left eye rapidly deteriorated over the previous 30 days, leaving her scared. The vision in her eye was like a fogged bathroom mirror post-shower, one she wasn’t able to wipe clear.

Price was referred to another eye specialist, then to a neuro-ophthalmologist. Finally, after an interminable six-hour wait inside a neurologist’s office the following Tuesday, she got a two-word diagnosis that changed her life: multiple sclerosis (MS). “My heart sank,” Price says. “I do all these wellness things. I didn’t want to receive this [news], and so I told them ‘maybe it’s just stress,’ and I went home.”

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication title: *Women's Health*
2. Publication number: 0706-0500
3. Filing date: October 1, 2024
4. Issue frequency: Bi-Monthly
5. Number of issues published annually: 6
6. Annual subscription price: \$16.94
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019
8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher: Brian Madden, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Editor: Liz Baker Plosser, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Managing editor: Laura McLaughlin, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.
10. Owner: Hearst Magazines, Inc. (complete mailing address: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019). Stockholders of Hearst Communications, Inc. are Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. (complete mailing address: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019)
11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None
12. Tax status: Not applicable
13. Publication title: *Women's Health*
14. Issue date for circulation data below: Jul/Aug 2024
15. Extent and nature of circulation:

Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months:	
a. Total no. of copies (net press run):	404,708
b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail)	
1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	217,933
2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	N/A
3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS*	25,712
4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS*	N/A
c. Total paid distribution	
243,645	
d. Free or nominal rate distribution (by mail and outside the mail)	
1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541	100,799
2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS Form 3541	N/A
3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS*	N/A
4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail (carriers or other means)	6,700
e. Total free or nominal rate distribution	
107,499	
f. Total distribution	
351,144	
g. Copies not distributed	
53,564	
h. Total	
404,708	
i. Percent paid	
69.39%	
No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date:	
a. Total no. of copies (net press run)	
292,885	
b. Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail)	
1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	140,442
2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	N/A
3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS*	23,000
4. Paid circulation by other classes of mail through the USPS* N/A	N/A
c. Total paid distribution	
163,442	
d. Free or nominal rate distribution (by mail and outside the mail)	
1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541	76,607
2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS Form 3541	N/A
3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS*	N/A
4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail (carriers or other means)	1,738
e. Total free or nominal rate distribution	
78,345	
f. Total distribution	
241,787	
g. Copies not distributed	
51,098	
h. Total	
292,885	
i. Percent paid	
67.60%	
16. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	
a. Requested and paid electronic copies	
193,823	
b. Total requested and paid print copies and requested and paid electronic copies	
437,468	
c. Total requested print distribution and requested and paid electronic copies	
544,966	
d. Percent paid (both print and electronic copies)	
80.27%	
No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date	
a. Requested and paid electronic copies:	
150,500	
b. Total requested and paid print copies and requested and paid electronic copies	
313,942	
c. Total requested print distribution and requested and paid electronic copies	
392,287	
d. Percent paid (both print and electronic copies)	
80.03%	

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

PROMOTION

the game plan

STUFF THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE.



Spread Delicious Mischief

BOO a friend, start a trend! This Halloween, grab a bag of BLUE Treats in fun seasonal shapes and flavors, and leave it on a neighbor's doorstep with a note to pay it forward.

BLUETreats.com



Skechers Viper Court Rally™ Pickleball & Padel Shoes

Never miss a chance to score with Skechers Viper Court Rally™. The stylish court sneakers feature lightweight and comfortable Move Foam™, plus Goodyear® Gold, designed for controlled slides to help you connect.

skechers.com

WOMENSHEALTHMAG.COM/PROMOTIONS

By Valentine's Day, she was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS)—one of four types of MS, the others being clinically isolated syndrome (CIS), primary progressive MS (PPMS), and secondary progressive MS (SPMS).

Price isn't the only person who recently received this life-changing diagnosis. Cases are on the rise: As of 2023, 2.9 million people worldwide were living with the disease—up from 2.3 million in 2013, per the MS International Federation. In the U.S., an estimated 1 million people had MS in 2019, which is about two times greater than reports from a national study from 1975. (The population has *not* also doubled in this time period; it went from roughly 216 million in 1975 to 328 million in 2019.) For Americans, the risk of developing MS is now about 1 in 333.

On a global scale, MS rates increased in every World Health Organization (WHO) region between 2013 and 2020, per a review in the National Library of Medicine using the Atlas of MS data.

Yet experts still don't have a clear answer as to why rates are rising so fast. "That's the billion-dollar question," says Michelle Fabian, MD, an associate professor of neurology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. "It's been a tough nut to crack for researchers."

A Quick Primer

MS is an autoimmune disease that attacks myelin, the fatty insulation that surrounds the nerves in the spinal cord and brain. In severe cases, MS can attack the axon, the nerve fibers responsible for transmitting electrical impulses. Think of your nerves as an iPhone charging cord (with the external insulation playing the role of myelin), says Dr. Fabian. If a cord is simply frayed, you can probably still use it. But if the smaller wires within the cord's casing are affected, the cord will be almost useless.

Myelin degeneration can result in scarring, or lesions on the nerves, most commonly in the brain and spinal cord, which in turn can cause coordination issues, dizziness, muscular weakness, sensation loss, and slurred speech. One of the most common symptoms is vision changes (like the kind Price experienced), when the immune system attacks the optic nerve connecting the eye to the brain.

Something to note: MS symptoms typically last for at least 24 hours, often longer, says Elena Grebenciucova, MD, an assistant professor of neurology at Northwestern University. So, if you're feel-



**2.9
million**
people across the
world were living with
MS in 2023.

Source: MS International Federation

ing a light tingling for a minute or so, it's not necessarily something that should make you rush to the doctor.

Finding the "Why"

Experts think there could be multiple factors at play when it comes to the baffling uptick in cases. There's no clear answer just yet, but experts such as Marwa Kaisey, MD, an assistant professor of neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, attribute the increase to both greater life expectancy and the adoption of more specific in-depth diagnostic criteria, which offers a better picture of the conditions that must be present to indicate a person has MS.

For example, in order for a doctor to confirm that a patient has MS, they must be able to do three things: find evidence of damage in at least two separate areas of the central nervous system (hence the "multiple" in "multiple sclerosis"), which includes the spinal cord and brain; find evidence that the damage occurred at different points in time; and rule out all other possible diagnoses. These diagnostic criteria, written in 2017, are helping doctors

diagnose more patients with MS who might previously have been diagnosed with another condition.

And for reasons that are also still unclear and currently being studied, MS is more prevalent in women than men, Dr. Kaisey says. In fact, MS affects two to three times as many women as men, the MS International Federation estimates. (Dr. Fabian points out that women are, in general, more prone to other autoimmune conditions such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.)

Another possible factor impacting this rise in MS rates? Fewer women are having children or they're having them later. "Women are waiting longer to have kids, and we've seen that pregnancy actually can decrease the risk of MS," says Dr. Fabian. The biological changes that occur during pregnancy include tamping down inflammation in the body that may otherwise trigger MS. Additionally, pregnancy hormones can, at times, positively affect the immune system, which can lessen the symptoms of MS, according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Surprisingly, MS in women is also affected by childhood obesity (which is prevalent among 19.7 percent of U.S. children and teens, according to the CDC), per one review from the University of California at Berkeley. This is because experiencing childhood obesity often results in getting a first period at a younger age, and according to Dr. Kaisey, this, along with other factors such as diet and gut microbiome health, increases risk of developing MS.

Getting Answers, Finding Treatment

The good news is that the rise in diagnoses has an upside. With greater awareness of the disease, more people are finding answers to their health symptoms sooner, says Dr. Grebenciucova. And that can be life-changing.

Megan Monahan, who was diagnosed with RRMS in her late 30s, first experienced health issues at 22, triggering gallstones and surgery, which left her without a gallbladder and with chronic hives for over eight months. The Los Angeles-based meditation teacher doesn't know if there's any correlation between her MS and the events of her 20s, but she's thankful to have finally gotten a diagnosis that empowered her on a path to health and healing—physically and emotionally. "I spent the first 20-some years of my life kind of 'I'm fine-ing' my way through," she says. "I can't help but wonder if I had [received] an MRI 10 years ago, would the lesions have been there?"

Monahan and Price would do almost anything to reverse the damage MS has wreaked on their bodies and lives. "I don't wish this disease on anyone. It's one of the most awful things I've ever had to endure," Price says. "Whether you have MS or not, I hope that women everywhere learn how to hold space for themselves, on their terms. Every day is a fight—don't give up."

NAD+

This supplement may help boost vitality. But is it really the fountain of youth?

By **Tianna Soto**



If you're already exercising regularly, you're well on your way to aging gracefully (and that's according to science!). But what if a supplement could help you along in that process? Enter nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺)—a mouthful to say, yes, but also an important molecule produced in the body that's necessary for over 500 enzyme functions, including DNA repair, cellular energy, and metabolic function. NAD⁺ naturally declines with age, so some experts say supplementing with this coenzyme could have anti-aging effects.

"NAD⁺ has been explored for its potential role in improving cognitive function, supporting cardiovascular health, and boosting performance," says Michelle Routhenstein, RD, a preventive cardiology dietitian at nutrition practice Entirely Nourished. Experts reveal their thoughts.

Preference Pick

NAD⁺ comes in a range of forms, from an IV option to oral capsules and tablets.



NAD+ supps can support aging.

POTENTIALLY

► A number of studies have found that NAD+ may extend lifespan and even slow the progression of Alzheimer's...in mice. Research on the supps' aging effects in humans is fairly new, and there's a lot we don't know yet. What we do know is that NAD+ may have a few health benefits, some of which may be related to aging.

To start, NAD+ has been found to improve insulin sensitivity in postmenopausal, prediabetic women. A high dose of NR (an NAD+ precursor) twice a day might improve some symptoms of Parkinson's disease, found a recent trial. The supps may also be helpful for brain health due to its function in protecting against diseases and improving cell energy, says Raj Dasgupta, MD, a physician and an associate program director of internal medicine residency at Huntington Memorial Hospital.

Taking NAD+ supps might even have fitness benefits, like enhancing performance, according to research in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, along with boosting oxygen use during exercise, per another study in *Frontiers of Aging*.

While this seems promising, more studies are needed to fully understand the possible perks.

These supps are good for people with heart issues.

UNCLEAR

► "Heart health is one of the most important factors when we think about aging," says Nisha Parikh, MD, MPH, system director of women's cardiovascular health at Northwell Health.

NAD+ may help protect against heart failure, hypertension, and arrhythmia, per a study in *Clinica Chimica Acta*, and getting more NAD+ could also be helpful for people with conditions like heart disease and dyslipidemia (an abnormal amount of lipids in the blood), per a different study in *Nutrition & Metabolism*. This may indicate some interesting perks for heart health, but the truth is that there haven't been enough clinical trials to determine exactly how it can help your heart and whether it's really effective. "If we were to have a really well-designed clinical trial, I think I would be a little more enthusiastic about it," says Dr. Parikh.

To take care of your heart, rather than rushing to buy a trendy supplement, go back to the basics and focus on getting vitamins from healthy foods, Dr. Parikh says.

It's possible to naturally boost NAD+.

YES, AND YOU SHOULD!

► "While NAD+ itself isn't directly available in food in substantial quantities, consuming a diet abundant in niacin [also known as vitamin B₃] can indirectly support NAD+ levels in the body," Routhenstein says. "Niacin serves as a precursor to NAD+ synthesis, meaning it's a necessary component for the body to produce it." Nuts, seeds, and proteins like chicken, turkey, beef, pork, tuna, and salmon are all rich in niacin. Resistance training and aerobic exercise also impact your levels, per research.

Everyone should start taking it immediately.

NOT SO FAST...

► Taking NAD+ seems to be generally safe and probably can't hurt, Dr. Parikh says—but it also seems to have little effect on already healthy people, per research in *Nutrition & Metabolism*. Regular doc visits don't usually include tests for NAD+ levels, so if you're curious, specialized labs can measure it, says Dr. Dasgupta. If you're low on NAD+, you may feel tired or have trouble thinking clearly, but these symptoms are likely due to other issues, so getting evaluated by a physician is best. Sense something is heart-related? See a cardiologist.

Choose Your NAD Adventure

If your doc clears you for NAD+ supplementation, you can pick how you take it. (FYI, potential side effects include GI distress, nausea, and headaches, says Tiffany Ma, RDN, CSSD, a sports dietitian.) More about the options:

IV Drip

This method allows for potentially quicker absorption and usually takes place at a medspa or boutique clinic, so it may be expensive, says Ma.

Sublingual Tablet

"Sublingual tablets are placed under the tongue, allowing for direct absorption into the bloodstream through the mucous membranes," says Routhenstein.

Pill or Capsule

For folks without chronic issues, 100 milligrams a day may help boost energy and cell function, Dr. Dasgupta says. Always discuss first with a doc, and stick to products that are third-party tested.

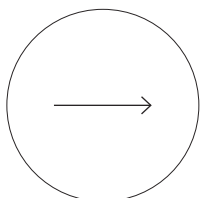


Planting New Roots

Six "late-bloomer lesbians" share their stories of how they learned to live—and love—authentically.

By **Lydia Wang**

Photographed by **Jeffrey Westbrook**



For decades, Susie Stonefield thought she was straight. She was married to a man, had

three kids with him, and, from the outside, was enjoying a “perfect” marriage. Then, at 56 years old, she came out as gay—a process that involved a lot of fear, and even grief. But today, she’s happier than ever.

Susie, now 61, is not the only “late bloomer” who discovered her sexuality later in life. Suzette Mullen, 63, didn’t come out until her 50s. Paulette Thomas-Martin, 72, liked girls at a young age but didn’t come out until around 40. Bridget Bertrand, 48, came out six years ago. And both Allison Garcia, 43, and Marina Brochado, 42, started discovering their sexuality around ages 37 and 38, respectively.

While younger queer women may take center stage on Instagram, in pop culture, and even at pride parades, the rich community of those who discovered their queerness in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and even later often goes overlooked. Many of these late-blooming lesbians and queer women were married to men, either before or while they figured out their sexuality; a lot of them are parents. Some found love with other people who came out later in life, some with women who’d been out since childhood.

Throughout my conversations with these women, I was moved by how many were able to identify with—and embrace—their queer-

ness despite growing up amid varying degrees of homophobia, as well as little to no positive representation in the media (or, often, in their personal lives). I swooned over their stories of falling in love, resonated with their experiences of finding community, and learned from their reflections on authenticity. Most notably, though, I was surprised and struck by the fact that we shared many of the same core experiences, despite coming out at different ages, in different places, and under wildly different circumstances.

Like Allison, I found comfort and joy in queer shows and romance novels before I came out. Like Marina, I somehow internalized the belief that kissing (or wanting to kiss) your friends as a teenager didn’t necessarily mean anything about your sexuality. And like Susie, I once had a thrilling, visceral, semi-spiritual moment of locking eyes with a person across the room and thinking, *This is unavoidable for me, and my life isn’t going to be the same.*

The interviews tapped into deep emotions: pain, relief, joy, and a complete lack of regret. “[My wife] and I talk about this all the time. If we had figured ourselves out sooner, we would never have met,” Allison says. “I feel like all of the things in my life built to where I am today.”

That doesn’t mean it was easy, though. Many of these women also shared fears, doubts, and the loneliness that came with feeling like the only person questioning their sexuality later in life—until they found community with other queer people, including fellow late bloomers, online and in person.

Joanne Fleisher, LCSW, author of *Living Two Lives: Married to a Man and In Love With a Woman*, had been married to a man for 12

years when she started to figure out her sexuality in the late 1970s. She was already a therapist, and after ending her marriage, she began working with married women who were questioning their sexuality or coming out. Back then, she felt she was one of very few professionals who had lived this transition herself and, therefore, was uniquely qualified to advise others.

“The process [of figuring out your sexuality and coming out] is extremely painful and uprooting, and there are a lot of losses in the process,” says Fleisher. But many of the women she’s connected with have also described the happiness and authenticity they eventually stepped into as something that’s “worth the struggle.”

“Almost everybody I have ever talked to feels like, as hard as the process was—and it is a hard process—there is such a sense of having landed,” Fleisher says. “Many people say it’s like coming home.”

Catalyst Collision

In chemistry, a catalyst is a substance that speeds up a chemical reaction. It changes an environment just enough to speed an outcome. A lot of late bloomers use the word *catalyst* to describe the crush, love interest, or moment that helped them realize their sexuality.

Bridget says her sexuality first started to “flicker” in college, when she was spending a semester in New York, but it wasn’t until she took an expressive arts workshop on healing through the body that the flicker turned into a full-blown flame. Prompted to paint a picture of her body and identify what she showed the world versus what she didn’t, the realization about her sexuality “just broke open,” she says. Everything started to click:



“I just find myself blossoming in every corner of my life now.”

ried to a man, had a kid, and was questioning her sexuality—and then realized, “Oh, shit. This is me.” She went on to write 80,000 words.

Individual Evolution

Often, after a catalytic moment comes a metamorphosis—which can look a little different for everyone. When Joanne Fleisher sees patients or gets messages from women online, she always reassures them that coming out is personal, and that it’s okay to take your time figuring out what you want to do. “There’s no right decision,” Fleisher says. Some people choose to stay in their marriage or open it up. Others end their relationship, but it takes a while.

Coming out—especially later in life—can bring a lot of loss. But it can also open the door for new communities, chosen families, and soul-filling relationships. Allison was scared that coming out would ostracize her from people in her life. She did, in fact, end up losing her best friend, who went to her old church. “But I gained all of these wonderful people,” Allison says.

She joined a progressive, queer-affirming church and connected with other later-in-life lesbians online. She started dating, and suddenly, sex made sense. With her ex-husband, Allison had felt “clumsy,” but with women, she “seemed to know exactly what to do.”

While seeking out queer community, Allison attended a potluck for older lesbians. She brought her then 4-year-old son and connected with the woman who is now her wife. “She was just very cute with my son. He was crawling over her, and it wasn’t fazing her,” Allison

crushes over the years, an openly queer friend she’d had a “deep friendship” with, the 11 Ani DiFranco concerts. At that workshop, she met the woman who would become her first lesbian relationship. Bridget told her spouse right away and asked if he’d be open to her dating that woman. “Within short order, he agreed,” she says. “And then I said, ‘This is really who I am,’ and he wasn’t surprised at all.” She moved out two weeks later.

Susie’s catalyst was a woman at synagogue. “In the middle of the service, we were sitting in a circle, and I’m looking across the room at her. She’s just staring at me. I’d never felt anything like it. I knew in that second; I felt this magnetic pull: I have to be with that woman.”

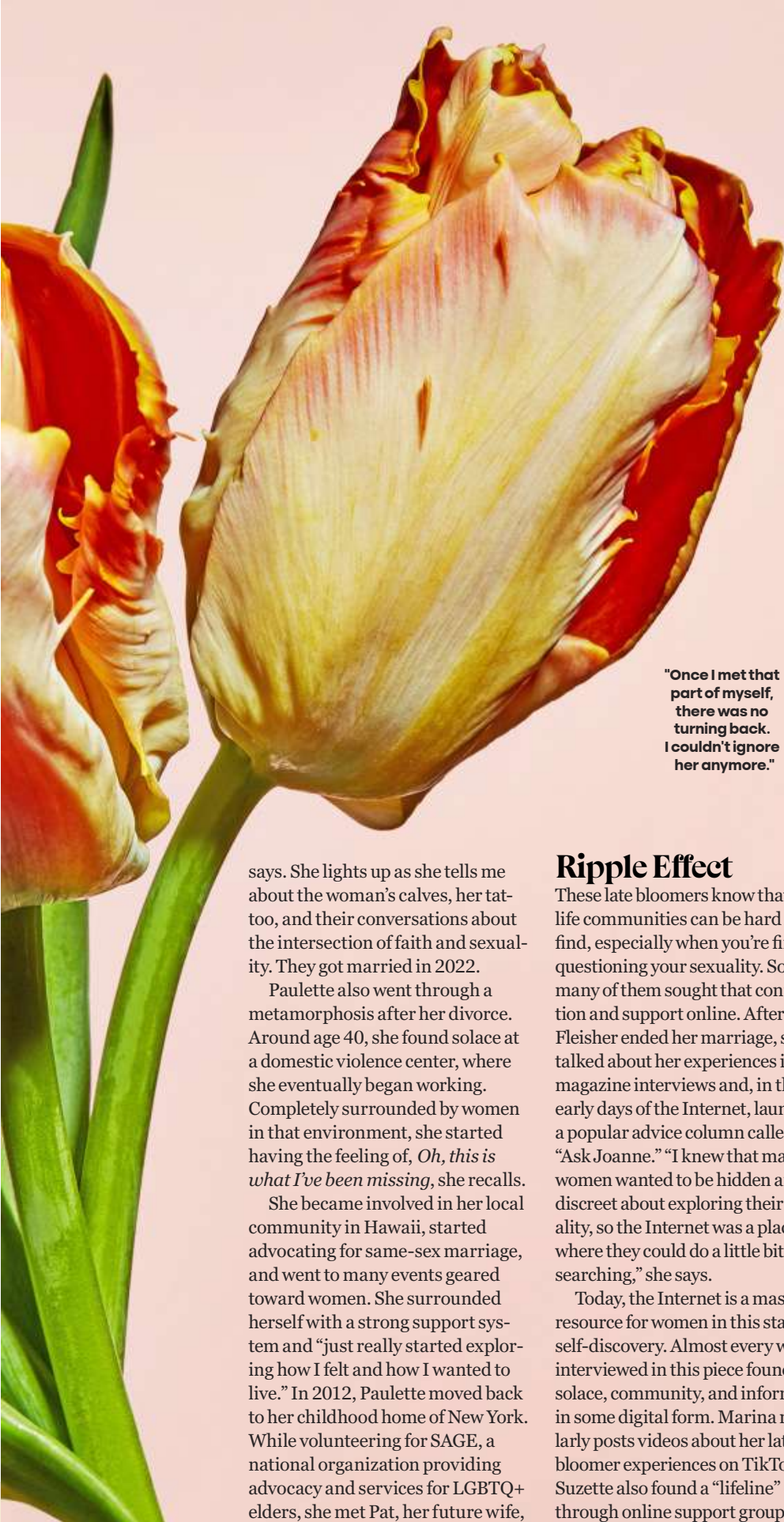
Once Susie took the leap (with her husband’s blessing to explore her sexuality), everything fell into place. Her relationship with the woman was short-lived, but it propelled Susie forward: She ended her marriage, moved out, and came out as queer. “There was a part of myself I had just never met, who

was so voraciously sensual and sexual....And once I met that part of myself, there was no turning back. I couldn’t ignore her anymore.”

For Suzette, the cataclysmic event involved writing. Around the time she became an empty nester, Suzette began focusing on her writing career. She found herself writing about an intimate moment with her best friend of 17 years: She felt the urge to touch her, and then, once she did, “this electric charge went through my body.” Suzette shared the scene with her book coach, who told her, “That sounds like someone falling in love.”

“When I saw that comment...I was like, ‘Oh, f*ck,’” Suzette says. “I had written it, and I knew it [meant] something, but it took someone else to actually name it. And then, once it was named, I knew it was true.”

Allison, also a writer, had a similar breakthrough moment. In 2018, at the end of a particularly bad year in her marriage, she sat down and started writing a novel. She wrote just three sentences—about a 37-year-old woman who was mar-



"Once I met that part of myself, there was no turning back. I couldn't ignore her anymore."

says. She lights up as she tells me about the woman's calves, her tattoo, and their conversations about the intersection of faith and sexuality. They got married in 2022.

Paulette also went through a metamorphosis after her divorce. Around age 40, she found solace at a domestic violence center, where she eventually began working. Completely surrounded by women in that environment, she started having the feeling of, *Oh, this is what I've been missing*, she recalls.

She became involved in her local community in Hawaii, started advocating for same-sex marriage, and went to many events geared toward women. She surrounded herself with a strong support system and "just really started exploring how I felt and how I wanted to live." In 2012, Paulette moved back to her childhood home of New York. While volunteering for SAGE, a national organization providing advocacy and services for LGBTQ+ elders, she met Pat, her future wife, who was promoting a dance event. They got married in 2018.

Ripple Effect

These late bloomers know that real-life communities can be hard to find, especially when you're first questioning your sexuality. So, many of them sought that connection and support online. After Fleisher ended her marriage, she talked about her experiences in magazine interviews and, in the early days of the Internet, launched a popular advice column called "Ask Joanne." "I knew that married women wanted to be hidden and discreet about exploring their sexuality, so the Internet was a place where they could do a little bit of searching," she says.

Today, the Internet is a massive resource for women in this stage of self-discovery. Almost every woman interviewed in this piece found solace, community, and information in some digital form. Marina regularly posts videos about her late-bloomer experiences on TikTok. Suzette also found a "lifeline" through online support groups and published a memoir to help others on their journey.

After Susie came out, she found a late-in-life lesbian support group on Facebook. She remembers sharing her photo and story in a post and receiving lots of affirming messages, compliments, and even flirtatious comments. "It felt so good and made me realize how I'd really been not trying to encourage that from my husband for a long time—and how it made me uncomfortable, feeling his attraction to me," she says. This kind of attention from women, however, was another story. "So that was very clarifying for me."

Some of the women have also used their stories as a way to help the next generation, including their own kids. "We groom our daughters to live under this mindset that their purpose is to get men's attention and approval, and that's how you're successful," Marina says. But she intentionally parents her teenage daughter to help her understand what she wants and what makes her happy, not what society tells her.

And in a beautiful, interconnected moment, Bridget found that her coming-out story helped her child feel more affirmed in his budding awareness of his queer and trans identity, encouraging him to come out a few years later.

Meanwhile, Paulette and her wife have established and gotten involved in several nonprofits and organizations devoted to serving the LGBTQ+ community in Harlem. Paulette thinks that if her younger self could see her life today, she "would rejoice and know that I am so loved," she says.

For a long time, Susie was guided by fear, but she's now happy too. She's in a safe, loving, and passionate relationship with her fiancée. She's even still "good friends" with the man she now calls her "wasband," who still comes to her family events. "My kids are fine—they got to see their parents doing what was right for them," she says. "And I just find myself blossoming in every corner of my life now."

"Learning to Ski at 57 Helped Me Embrace Uncertainty"

Tackling something new—and terrifying—was exactly what one freshly single midlifer needed.

By Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon

t

Taking up skiing at any age is challenging. But doing it at 57? When I signed up for a two-day intensive course at

ski school in Switzerland, friends gasped, "At your age?!"

I've always been more interested in après-ski than in the sport itself. Lounging on mountain decks, hot chocolate by the fire, and most of all, the outfits! A Miami-dwelling fashionista like me could really cut a dash in the cute bobble hats and colorful, retro-style ski suits I'd been eyeing in the Free People catalog.

A few months earlier, I'd adopted a motto for my newly single life: "If not now, when? If not me, who?" So now that my work as a travel writer presented this opportunity, shouldn't I seize it? I've been a runner for 20 years and lifted weights regularly for the last 2, so I felt confident I wouldn't be the first in my class to fall. More important, like many midlifers, I've been tempted to stick to the stuff I know I'm good at, for fear of looking foolish. But in a season of life often characterized by a cascade of endings—fertility, careers, the ability to read fine print, and my marriage among them—what a gift it could be to start


something new, regardless of the risk for injury and almost certain embarrassment.

This is how I found myself in Mürren, a picturesque village (population: 428) in the Bernese Alps. Accessible by foot, bike, and cable car, from Lauterbrunnen or Stechelberg in the upper Lauterbrunnen Valley, the ski spot is far less “ski and be seen” than St. Moritz or Gstaad, and its residents are unpretentious.

The morning of my first class, my stomach roils with nerves on the short walk to InSport, the outfitter where my feet are measured and I’m presented with a pair of rigid, Frankensteinian ski boots. Just getting into them is a workout, and by the time I’ve fastened both feet, I’m sweating profusely beneath my base layers. I’m issued a pair of surprisingly heavy skis and skiing poles before I galumph out of the store and set off to Schweizer Skischule Mürren-Schilthorn.

There, our instructor, Christian Edalini, awaits our class of four. Also middle-aged, with a mocha tan and fit physique, he’s wearing a crimson vest accessorized with a Day-Glo orange helmet and ski boots, which I immediately covet.

Our two-hour class starts with the basics: how to get our boots into the ski bindings (toes first, then push down with your heel until you hear a click). Then how to aim our skis (parallel, like two French fries). And how to use our poles (keeping them behind us and pushing backward to propel us forward). As each of us drops our poles, Christian offers some valuable advice: When you’re not using them, always keep your “sticks” upright and planted in the snow on either side of you, so you never have to bend down (no easy feat for a beginner in ski gear) to retrieve them. He gives life advice too. “Always ski when you can. On the slopes and in life, if you have a choice between skiing and walk-



**"My motto:
If not now,
when? If not
me, who?"**

ing, always choose skiing, because there’s much less physical effort involved.” Choose the path of least resistance, you say, Christian? Noted.



Our first foray on the snow isn’t on a bunny (blue) slope. Instead, it’s a gentle gradient, only about seven feet high, next to the parking lot. One behind the other, my classmates and I go up and down it, sliding our skis forward on the uphill, then pushing with our sticks to glide downward. I love the free, flying feeling of going downhill and gleefully lean forward into it. I’m skiing!

Then Christian instructs us to turn our skis perpendicular to the mound, so we don’t slide backward. But I keep losing traction. I can’t get the hang of leaning my skis into the snow to anchor myself, and I start

to slide. The inevitable happens: I lose my footing and unceremoniously fall off the snowbank, landing in a heap in the driveway. Despite my best efforts, the oldest person in the group has been the first to fall, and I feel my face flush with embarrassment.

But in those first few seconds on my back, immobilized like a giant insect with my skis pointing upward in different directions, I don’t cry. Instead, I do a two-second body scan, realize I’m not hurt, and laugh. The “worst” has happened and I’m okay. I had to fall eventually, so why not now? And in the grand scheme of things, what does it matter? Christian comes over and nonchalantly removes my skis from their bindings, and I clamber up, ready to try again.

“There’s such a difference between teaching kids and adults,” Christian says. “Kids learn just by copying my movements. But adults need to be told all the steps, given

verbal instructions for exactly what to do. They need to get it in the brain before it translates to the body. Their fear of falling really complicates the process.”

By the end of our first hour, I've learned how to glide (ski!), how to go uphill (almost), and how to stop (kinda) by pointing the tips of my skis together into a triangle so they make the shape of a slice of pizza. In the second hour, we move to the bunny slope, where a pulley system takes us up and we practice skiing down. I feel pure joy as I go downhill with wind rushing past my helmet, and I manage to stop a few feet in front of the orange plastic fence.

Class ends, and I'm spent. My triceps ache from all that pole pushing, and my shins are sore from leaning forward into my boots. It's nothing a hot shower can't cure.

t

The next day I'm more eager than nervous. On tap: another two-hour group class in the morning and an afternoon private lesson while my

travel companions visit a nearby cheesemaker. I get into my boots in half the time, and we practice our descents on the blue slope. Christian wants me to work on my snowplow (pizza pie) technique. But the “legs wide apart, heels out, toes in” position is a challenge for me and, truth is, I love to go fast. And if that means that 30 percent (okay, 50 percent) of the time I whiz down the hill and topple at the bottom? As long as I'm not hurt, who cares?

Our private session soon puts me in my place. With three fewer people in the class, I'm doing four times as much work, all under Christian's unflinching supervision. “You're doing it wrong! Go again!” he scolds as I come down the slope too fast. I can't seem to widen my legs or point my toes enough to slow and stop quickly. I keep trying and am getting marginally better. But I'm increasingly frustrated with myself



and, though I know he has only good intentions, bristle at Christian's brand of tough love.

We take a break for a square of chocolate, and Christian offers a pep talk. “Learning to ski is like learning a language; you can't pick it up in two days,” he tells me.

“But eventually, with practice, you become proficient. It takes time.”

The sugar rush kicks in 15 minutes later, and I'm ready to try again. There's a “magic carpet” conveyor belt that goes up an intermediate slope, and Christian suggests we try it. On my first attempt, as Christian records from the bottom of the hill, I start confidently. But as I ski closer to the finish, I lean back to smile for the camera and fall to the ground. On the second try, appropriately humbled, I'm more respectful of the mountain. As I descend, I repeat Christian's

instructions: “Weight on both skis! Lean forward! Breathe! Smile!”

This time I come down at a steady pace before slowing to a stop and triumphantly raising my sticks in the air. I “graduated” from ski school, empowered and proud that I stepped out of my comfort zone.

Back home in Miami, I appreciate ski school's lessons even more. I learned that sometimes the only difference between what feels like flying and what feels like falling is fear. Whether it's learning to ski or to code, we're always free to try something new. On those snowy slopes, I discovered the fun of being a beginner. I discovered the inevitability and value of failure. Now, instead of worrying about the future, I lean into the uncertainty of this stage of my life and welcome its possibilities. And if I stumble? I'll simply regroup and try again.



Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon (@JetSetSarah) is based in Miami, where she's currently shopping for brightly colored ski clothing.

Facial sculpting, contouring & lifting

The professional grade bt-sculpt from Bio-Therapeutic does it all, merging precise kinesthetic lifting with targeted True Microcurrent to help visibly lift and tone the facial landscape in just minutes a day. bt-sculpt.com



Easiest way to eat more fruits & veggies

Only 10% of us eat enough! Each tasty bar packs in 1.5 cups of nutrient-dense organic fruits & real veggies, rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants & fiber that boosts energy, strengthens immunity & promotes longevity. goodthinkingfoods.com



In 3 flavors

Age-defying beauty & wellness supplement

Diminish signs of aging with VitaMedica's Anti-Aging Formula, conveniently pre-packaged for day & night. See youthful, glowing skin, healthier hair & nails, boosted energy & more restful nights. 20% off! Code: **WSAVE20** at vitamedica.com



Naturalist skincare with real results

Motherline is skincare for the purist, the minimalist & anybody who wants nourished, glowier skin. Its organic ingredients are nothing but earth, produce collagen & do anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial wonders for your skin. motherline.com



GET YOUR

wellness freak on

Gifts of self-care your GFs could really use

A doctor recommended vibrator? Yes!

This FDA-registered vibrator is clinically proven to heighten arousal & help alleviate dryness, thanks to its ultra-flexible shape designed to hit all the right spots. Extra 10% off 30% off sitewide sale! Code: **WH10** at mysteryvibe.com

FSA/HSA eligible

FDA-cleared



Most appreciated gift. IYKYK!

Pee leaks no more. Elitone helps you do those crucial exercises that keep pelvic health tight - doing Kegels for you! It's external, comfy, discreet, and takes just 20 minutes a day. \$35 off! Code: **WH35** at elitone.com

Skincare for your sex life

Revaree® Plus is a vaginal insert designed to moisturize, restore, & rejuvenate with hyaluronic acid and sweet almond oil. Save 20% on your 1st month of a subscription! Code: **WH20** at hellowbonafide.com/wh



THE place for supplements

Discover premium USA-made supplements by Daily Defense for immunity, energy, diet, anti-aging, digestion, hormonal balance, brain support, and more! Featuring: Youthful Cleanse. 20% off on all orders! Code: **WH20** at mydailydefense.com



GLP-Trim for weight loss & maintenance

Naturally boost GLP-1 production with a clinically proven dose of berberine + turmeric & black pepper extract. Formulated by Medi-Weightloss, the experts in medical weight loss. 15% off! Code: **TRENDS** at shop.trendsweightloss.com

SCAN

FOR ACCESS TO SHOP @TIPSNTRENDS

tipsntrends.com



FOR PAWS & NOSES!

100% natural & made with prebiotics & manuka honey, Skout's Honor Prebiotic Pet Balm soothes and protects dry, itchy paws and noses. skoutshonor.com



ULTIMATE MEMORY & FOCUS BOOSTER

Enhance your memory. Sharpen your focus. Boost cognitive clarity. Nourish your brain! At pharmacy & health food stores. 718-514-0773 vitavocalhealth.com



TOP DEVICE FOR THINNING HAIR

LaserCap is one of the best ways for men & women to treat thinning hair! LLLT revives dying follicles to produce thicker, healthier hair. lasercap.com/tn



BEAUTY + RESTFUL SLEEP MEET

Bio-optimize your bedtime self-care w/Beauty Sleep Serum's cutting edge blend of melatonin, apigenin, omega-3 & GABA. 25% off! Code: **WH25** facialnova.com



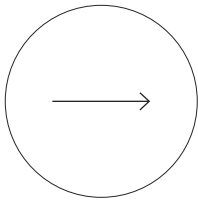
MENOPAUSE MUST-HAVE

Need better sleep, calm legs, more energy & stress relief? Morplus Magnesium is your gentle, easily absorbed go-to. 15% off! Code: **WHMAG15** wearmorphus.com

Silver Linings Playbook

You can learn how to become more optimistic, no matter your starting point.

By Addison Aloian



So, you're running late to work because you overslept (thanks for nothing, alarm clock!) and hit every single red light on your morning commute. You finally

reach your destination, only to have a bird poop on you—no joke—as you walk through the door. Then you stub your toe mid-sprint to an important meeting with your boss (ya know, the thing you're already late for). *Ugh, just my luck*, you think. *Of course this would happen to me; stuff like this always happens to me.*

Sound frustratingly familiar? If you often feel trailed by a personal, perpetual rain cloud, you might be a pessimist—i.e., someone who tends to have a negative outlook on life. Optimists, meanwhile, have a knack for finding the silver lining. They expect the best possible outcome in the face of uncertainty, says psychiatrist Sue Varma, MD, author of *Practical Optimism: The Art, Science, and Practice of Exceptional Well-Being*.

For better or worse, where you fall on the optimism-pessimism spectrum is at least partially out of your control. Only about 25 percent of optimism is genetic, meaning you inherit a natural tendency to see the glass as half-full or half-empty, according to Dr. Varma. However, other experts say more research needs to be done before the nature vs. nurture debate is settled; neuroscientist Claudia Aguirre, PhD, a *Women's Health* advisory board member, says it's still unknown just how much genes factor into optimism.

While experts agree that both nature and nurture play a role, the “nurture [compo-

nent], with respect to optimism, is far more important than nature,” says Ellen Langer, PhD, a psychology professor at Harvard University. Perhaps you have a natural tendency toward pessimism, but you had a great childhood filled with nurturing, happy experiences. That lifestyle element will shape your long-term view of the world and help you gravitate toward thinking positively, Aguirre says. But the reverse is also true: If you're an inherent optimist with pessimistic parents, they might have raised you to expect the rain, not a rainbow.

No matter how the scale tilts for you, it's possible to change how

you think. After all, no one is optimistic or pessimistic 100 percent of the time, says Aguirre. When sh*t happens (see: bird poop mid-morning), remember that your reaction has more power than you might think. While you can't always control what life throws at you, you can control whether you interpret it in a positive or negative manner, says Langer. So, if you feel stuck in your Eeyore outlook but want to have a more Tigger-inspired spring in your step, don't worry (or try not to, anyway): There are ways to develop your optimism.

And there are tons of good reasons to strengthen that mental muscle. Being optimistic can help you build resilience and become more social, as well as potentially improve your cardiovascular health, per a study in *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine*. Plus, optimism has been connected to a longer lifespan and exceptional longevity, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Ahead, experts share tried-and-true techniques for flexing that happiness muscle every day.

Bright Side Meets Bounce Back

As your optimism increases, so does your resilience. While the concepts aren't exactly the same—“resilience is about bouncing back from adversity, and optimism is about thriving in the face of it,” says Dr. Varma—they do have a symbiotic relationship. When you're more optimistic, you tend to try more things, and when you try, you fail sometimes, Aguirre says. But when you learn from those mistakes and try again? That's your resilience shining through.



Consider Your Set Point

Your set point is where you initially fall on the optimism-pessimism spectrum, Dr. Varma says. Say, for instance, you got the time wrong for a friend's birthday party. Do you tend to think, *Great, now I'm going to be an hour late. I may as well not*

even go (pessimistic)? Or, *That's a bummer, but I'll still make the most of it—I'm excited to celebrate my friend* (optimistic)? Once you ask yourself that question, you might be surprised to realize you're not as ready to roll with the punches as you thought, Dr. Varma says. Or you might be pleasantly surprised

by your pluck. Either way, gauging whether you're more of an optimist or a pessimist is the first step toward learning how you can function better.

Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is "the very simple process of actively noticing new things," Langer says. So, when you walk out your front door each day, notice three new things. Maybe the leaves on the trees aren't just "green" but many shades of green, your street looks extra beautiful, or you see a corgi puppy on a walk (and you didn't even know one lived in your neighborhood!). When you are mindful, you'll learn new things, see situations in multiple ways, and be able to view situations more positively over time, Langer says. Learning to look on the bright side with your everyday surroundings can translate into viewing bigger life events in a more positive light too.

Reframe Your Thoughts

"The words we use matter," says Daniel Lerner, a clinical instructor in the department of child and adolescent psychiatry at New York University and the coauthor of *U Thrive*. Consider your explanatory style, which is the way you explain negative events to yourself, he says. If you were totally unprepared for an important meeting with your boss and had an optimistic explanatory style, you'd most likely think, *Well, it was just one meeting*. However, someone with a pessimistic explanatory style might say, *They'll never be able to trust me again, and I'm going to get fired*. Truth is, even optimists have negative thoughts sometimes, and optimism isn't about rejecting or repressing those thoughts altogether. When you're having a negative thought, invite it in, but then ask yourself if there's another way to look at the situation, Dr. Varma says. Replace



Practice Positivity

Optimism is a skill you have to hone, like learning a language, says Dr. Varma.

the negative words, even if it feels uncomfortable. “The more granular you can become about the things that bother you, the more likely you are to change them,” she says.

The shift: *In reality, it was only one meeting. Next time, I'll ask my boss how I can prepare better and take notes on their feedback.* Reframing negative thoughts can help propel you toward optimism in times of need, without being overly optimistic, Lerner says.

Find the Fun in Your Routine

Optimists make normally mundane tasks—scheduling doctor's appointments and running errands—feel easy, fun, convenient, and accessible, Dr. Varma says. This is why optimists tend to get stuff done. (Another benefit of seeing the glass as half-full!) Always struggle to book your annual doctor's checkup? Instead of perceiving your appointment as an annoying chore, see it as a self-care exercise. Or, if you're tempted to whine about the dry cleaning you need to drop off and the prescriptions you have to pick up, infuse some fun into your errand run by listening to a mood-boosting playlist or adding a “little treat” pit stop, like grabbing a cookie or an iced tea from your local bakery. This will help you practice getting excited about, and seeing the good in, even the “less fun” parts of life.

Journaling “helps train your brain to start to see possibility.”

Plan With Purpose

Life becomes more meaningful when you stack your calendar with activities that bring you joy, like volunteering for a cause you care about or making time for your favorite weekly workout class. (FYI, exercise has legit been shown “to boost your sense of purpose,” which is something optimists have a strong sense of, Dr. Varma says.)

First, take inventory of your current social cal. Think about the activities that bring you joy and the ones that aren't as fun. Then incorporate more of those joy-filled activities into your routine, perhaps once a week. When you think about what you really enjoy in life, you're tapping into a key part of yourself, which is how you find meaning and purpose. It's all about gaining clarity and motivation in your life, which will help you have a more optimistic outlook.

Journal Consistently

Make a habit of journaling for your mental health twice a week for 10 to 15 minutes, says Dr. Varma. She recommends writing down everything going on in your head during

these seshes, but if you need prompts to get started, write about some best-case scenarios: *What does living my best life look like? If everything worked out, what would my life look like five years from now?* You can also write about past positive experiences, like that race where you PR'd, and ask yourself what you could've done even better. This type of journaling “helps train your brain [to] start to see possibility,” Dr. Varma says, which will then open your eyes to seeing that your best life (or a new PR!) is within reach.

Branch Out Socially

There's a direct relationship between positive thinking and being social: “Optimists make a genuine effort to be with people,” says Dr. Varma. Try deliberately putting yourself in social situations. Then be open and vulnerable so you form emotional connections. That could mean arriving at yoga class early so you can talk to the instructor or potential new friends. In this scenario, the key is to be real and relatable and ask questions, says Dr. Varma. Later, follow up at the next class—maybe ask someone to grab coffee afterward.

Remember, anyone can become an optimist—you just need to train your brain to get there, Aguirre says. Even if it takes time to cultivate, optimizing your optimism is worth the extra effort.

▶▶ How to Avoid Overdosing on Optimism

It's true, too much of the good vibes can be harmful. Case in point: the ostrich effect, wherein you think so positively that “you bury your head in the sand and hope everything will work out,” Dr. Varma says. For instance, maybe you're so optimistic you'll ace a work presentation that you skimp on the prep. That might lead to some rough results, like forgetting your script when you get to the third slide or relaying a stat wrong in front of coworkers. That's why some pessimism here and there can be beneficial, says Lerner. “If you don't anticipate some stress in an event, then when it hits, you're ill prepared,” he says.

If you're a pessimist, you might go into said presentation thinking of everything that could go wrong, like forgetting the script, feeling sweaty, and getting dry mouth. So, you practice the presentation at home five times, then bring note cards, an extra shirt, and a bottle of water along with you. Pessimists “often perform better because they've prepared and they've allayed their own concerns about what could go wrong,” Lerner says. Still, too much pessimism can bog you down in negativity. The key is to strike a balance and use both ways of thinking to your advantage, which is referred to as practical optimism, says Dr. Varma.

From the Editors at Women's Health



WOMEN'S HEALTH+

Join our membership program to level-up your health, fitness, and well-being all year long!

You'll unlock exclusive perks including a members-only newsletter, premium workout videos, access to our 30-Day Fitness Challenges, and special discounts on the All/Out Studio fitness app.

SCORE ALL OF THIS (AND MORE) WHEN YOU REGISTER



An entire year of *Women's Health* delivered right to your door



Unrestricted access to [womenshealthmag.com](https://www.womenshealthmag.com) and our members-only newsletter



Premium fitness content available only to WH+ members

Join for less than \$1/week

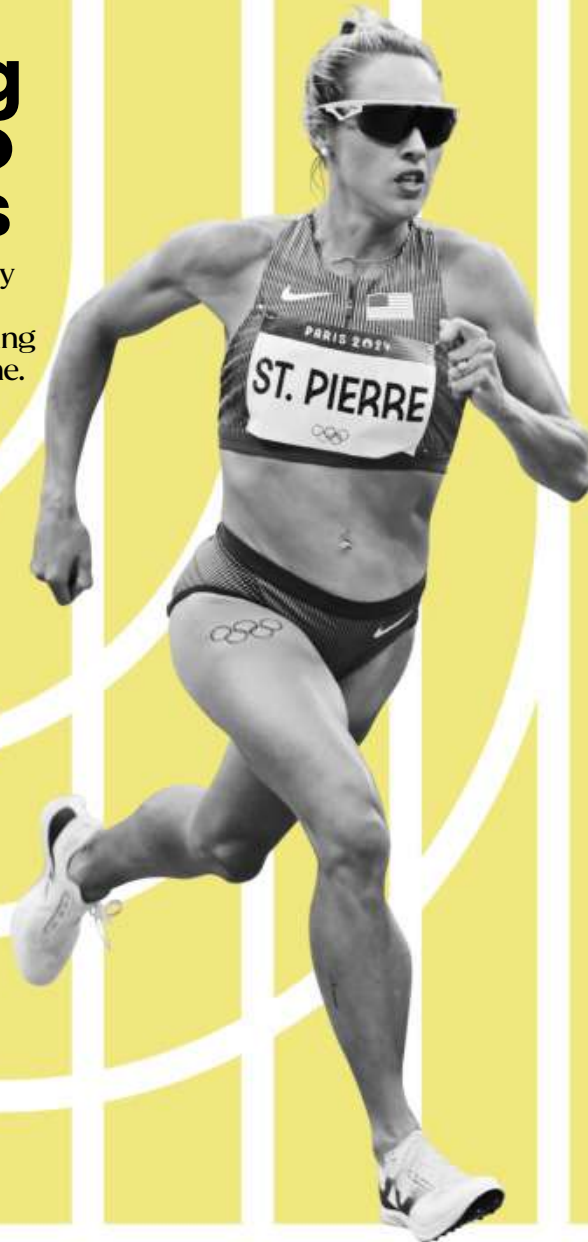
Head to [womenshealthmag.com/joinnow](https://www.womenshealthmag.com/joinnow) or scan to join.



Running With No Regrets

Athlete, mom, and dairy farmer Elle Purrier St. Pierre taps into a winning mindset to get it all done.

By **Amanda Lucci**



1 Find the Right Balance

▶ Working on the farm prevents Elle from expending all her mental energy on running. "It helps me not get burned out," she says. "It's a breath of fresh air." Bonus: Multiple passions keep her schedule full, so she procrastinates less—and always has something to look forward to.

2 Regret-Proof Your Goals

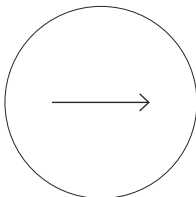
▶ Even before Elle crossed the finish line at the Olympics, she was already at peace, knowing she had put in the hard work and done everything possible to prepare—regardless of the outcome. "I knew that if I tried as hard as I could, I would be okay with that," she says. "What more can I ask of myself?"

3 Listen to Your Body

▶ "Taking a break from running while I was pregnant gave me a greater appreciation for it," Elle says. "I missed it, so I was happy to get back." To avoid feeling rushed or forced into a certain routine (and dulling that excitement!), she followed her body's cues and eased back in at her own pace.

4 Remember: You're Worth It

▶ Elle has plenty on her plate but knows prioritizing sleep, fuel, and recovery is important for more than sport. "Everything you're doing to improve performance is taking care of your body," she says. "It feels selfish sometimes, but in reality, I am not just running for myself."



When pro athlete Elle Purrier St. Pierre toes the starting line, she thinks about all the reasons why she wants to have an amazing race. The biggest is her support system—especially her 1-year-old son, Ivan, who traveled to the Paris Olympics over the summer to see his mom compete in the women's 1,500m. "Having him in the stands was so rewarding," the two-time Olympian says. "If I told my [younger] self that I was going to have a baby and I was

going to be running at the next Olympics—both of my dreams together—it's just really awesome." When she's not going after goals on the track, the New Balance athlete has a dedicated reset routine that includes gardening, baking, and working on the Vermont dairy farm she calls home. And once she returned this August after a long, tough training season, the farm was her first stop. "I went straight to the barn," she says. "I'm like, *You know what? Mental health is important, and this makes me happy, being around the cows.*" Ahead, Elle shares her resilience strategies.



THE PERFECT GIFT

Give the gift of convenience this holiday season with the BlendJet 2 portable blender! Whether they're health conscious, always on the move, or simply love delicious blends, it's the gift that keeps on giving. It's powerful, compact, USB-C rechargeable, and cleans itself.

70+ colors. Free 2-Day S&H.

Black Friday Sale: Save up to 25% at blendjet.com/womenshealth



More Energy, Less Injury

VKTRY's carbon fiber insoles have been scientifically proven to increase performance and decrease injuries. *Try risk free for 90 days.* VKTRY.com



The \$50 Cashmere Sweater

The luxuriously soft & affordable sweater everyone loves in 100% Grade A Mongolian cashmere. Only at Quince.com



The Best *Holiday* Gifts!



KOA+ROY

Gift relaxation and self care – This all natural Massage Cube soothes aches, nourishes your skin, and makes exchanging massages effortless. Perfect for anyone! koaroy.com



Get-Lean Gift Set

Kick start get-lean resolutions with natural fat burner Performance Meta Burn+ and Protein+, with 23g protein and Microlactin® for healthier joints.

Power Up for \$74.99! nbpure.com



The World's First Full Face and Jowl LED Mask

Experience Dr. Rajani's patented LED light therapy mask, designed to tighten jowls, smooth forehead lines, and reduce wrinkles. PlasmaGLO™ delivers light therapy to the skin's deepest layers where collagen synthesis takes place.

Get \$50 off your purchase with code WH50
SHOP: store.RajaniMD.com

[▶](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) RajaniMDskincare



Almased Weight loss Protein shakes

Lose up to 10 lbs quick for holiday parties. It's the natural protein shakes everyone's talking about that detoxifies your liver. Backed by science.

almased.com | 1.877.256.8733



Give The Gift Of Skin Longevity

Science-backed skincare that helps to boost NAD levels through a novel nanoliposome technology and a mitochondrial targeting antioxidant, methylene blue, to address skin aging from the inside out.

renewblue.com

SCAN TO SHOP



The Perfect Gift for Your Vagina

Elevate your vaginal health this holiday season with science-backed products from O Positiv Health. OBGYN-formulated for women with clinically-studied ingredients.

Available at Target nationwide. opositiv.com | [@opositiv](https://www.instagram.com/opositiv)



Best sustainable gift.

These fair trade eco dryer balls are handmade by women artisans in Nepal. They shorten drying times, soften clothes, and make laundry fun. Toxin- and plastic-free, each purchase supports reforestation and animal rescues.

Use code WH15 for 15% off.

friendsheepwool.com



pixi GLOW ON-THE-GO.

Meet On-the-Glow Blush ✨ Your all-in-one, color-enhancing balm for a fresh, dewy glow anytime, anywhere. Infused with skin-loving Ginseng, Aloe Vera, and Fruit Extracts, this viral sensation hydrates as it highlights. Perfect for cheeks, lips, and eyes—just swipe and glow!

Find your perfect shade and use code PIXIONTHEGLOW for 20% off.* pixibeauty.com



Holiday Beeswax & Essential Oil Candles

Made from beeswax, coconut oil, pure essential oils, and a crackling wooden wick, Fontana Candle Co. makes truly natural and certified non-toxic home scenting options.

fontanacandlecompany.com



deep dives

Settle in
for great reads—
and a healthy
exploration of
the power
of our bodies.



The Frankie Shop hoodie, thefrankieshop.com; Oye Swimwear swimsuit, oyeswimwear.com; Maje sneakers, us.maje.com; Alexis Bittar earrings, alexisbittar.com; Bonbonwhims ring, bonbonwhims.com; Ever Vessel bottle, evervessel.com

STYLING: KRISTEN SALADINO; HAIR: JACOB ROZENBERG AT THE WALL GROUP; MAKEUP: KELSEY DEENIHAN AT THE WALL GROUP; MANICURE: JULIE KANDALEC AT BRYAN BANTRY AGENCY; SET DESIGN: SARAH CAYE



Not every dish can sit in the fridge (or freezer) and taste delicious the next day. But with a few smart strategies and recipes designed with re-eating in mind, you can stock your kitchen with ready-made fare. Future you says, “Thank ya!”



BY SAMANTHA MACAVOY RECIPES BY KRISTINA KUREK
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOE LINGEMAN



For like-fresh results, store the shrimp separately and hold toppings 'til mealtime.

The image shows three blue ceramic bowls filled with a creamy yellow soup. Each bowl is topped with several pieces of cooked shrimp and sliced green onions. The bowls are arranged in a triangular pattern on a grey, textured surface. A pink banner with the word 'PREP' is overlaid on the middle bowl, and a teal banner with the word 'SCHOOL' is overlaid on the bottom bowl.

PREP

SCHOOL

QUICK BISON AND THREE-BEAN CHILI

TOTAL: 30 MIN. SERVES: 4

- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 3 large cloves garlic, grated
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 1 Tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 lb ground bison
Kosher salt
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 1 15-oz can bean trio, rinsed
- 1 14.5-oz can fire-roasted crushed tomatoes
- 1 12-oz jar roasted red peppers, drained and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped, plus more for topping
- 1/3 cup roasted pepitas, for topping (optional)
- 1/2 cup plain whole milk Greek yogurt, for topping (optional)

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven on medium. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, 5 to 6 min. Sprinkle with garlic, cumin, and smoked paprika and cook, stirring, 30 sec.

2. Add bison, increase heat to medium-high, season with 1/2 tsp salt and cook, breaking up meat with spoon, until no

longer pink, 4 to 5 min. Stir in tomato paste and cook 2 min.

3. Stir in beans, crushed tomatoes, roasted peppers, and 1 cup water. Cover, decrease heat to a simmer, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until flavors meld, about 5 min. Stir in cilantro. Serve chili topped with additional cilantro and pepitas and yogurt if desired.

Per serving: About 441 cal, 18.5 g fat (4.5 g sat), 79 mg chol, 771 mg sodium, 38 g carb, 11 g fiber, 12.5 g sugar (2 g added sugar), 30 g pro



Freezer Pleaser

Prepare chili without cilantro or toppings and freeze up to two months. Thaw overnight, then warm on medium-low or microwave until heated through and top as desired.





make-ahead mastery

1 ▶ Wait for foods to cool completely before storing. Putting something piping hot into your fridge or freezer can warm up surrounding foods (potentially to unsafe temps).

2 ▶ Undercook items that are prone to mush (think: tender veggies) when meal prepping so they won't overcook when reheated.

3 ▶ Save ingredients marked "for serving" until you're ready to dig in, but prewash herbs (dry really well; store in paper towels) and chop or roast nuts so they're good to go.

4 ▶ Dinner for one? Freeze leftovers in single-serve portions so you don't have to thaw everything at once.

5 ▶ Label all freezer-safe containers with the date for reference. Permanent markers and masking tape are go-tos.



Wake-Up Call

Contrary to popular belief, soups and stews don't necessarily improve over time, per food scientists. In fact, spicy or acidic flavors can dull. Liven things up with hot sauce or a squeeze of citrus.

TURKEY AND RED LENTIL STEW

TOTAL: 45 MIN. SERVES: 4

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 Tbsp canola oil | 1/4 tsp ground coriander |
| 1 1/2 tsp cumin seeds | 1 lb dark meat ground turkey |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 3 Tbsp red curry paste or Massaman curry paste |
| 1 medium poblano pepper, cut in 1/4-in. pieces, divided | 2/3 cup split red lentils (masoor dal), rinsed |
| Kosher salt | 6 Tbsp natural smooth peanut butter |
| 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped | 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped, plus more for topping |
| 1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger | Chopped roasted peanuts, for serving |
| 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon | Lime wedges, for serving |

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven on medium. Add cumin and cook, stirring, 15 sec. Add onion, all but 1/4 cup poblano, and 1/2 tsp salt and sauté until just tender, 7 to 8 min. Stir in garlic, ginger, cinnamon, and coriander and sauté, 2 min.

2. Add turkey and cook on medium-high, breaking up meat, until cooked through and beginning to brown, 6 to 8 min.

3. Stir curry paste into turkey, then add lentils and 2 1/2 cups water; simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender, 20 to 25 min., adding more water if too thick. Stir in peanut butter until evenly distributed, add more water if too thick, then stir in cilantro.

4. Serve topped with reserved poblano, cilantro, and peanuts if desired. To make ahead: Cook stew without cilantro and refrigerate up to 3 days. Rewarm gently.

Per serving: About 518 cal, 23 g fat (4.5 g sat), 90 mg chol, 744 mg sodium, 39 g carb, 7 g fiber, 9 g sugar (0.5 g added sugar), 40 g pro

ROMESCO TEMPEH AND QUINOA

TOTAL: 25 MIN. SERVES: 4

- 1 1/3 cups quinoa
- 2 Tbsp sherry vinegar
- 1 large clove garlic, grated (1 tsp)
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 4 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- 2 8-oz pkg. tempeh, cut into 1/2-in. cubes
- 1 12-oz jar roasted piquillo or red peppers, drained and chopped
- 1 cup raw almonds, well toasted and chopped, plus more for serving
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
- 1 1/2 oz Manchego cheese, grated, plus more for serving

1. In medium saucepan, combine quinoa with 2 1/2 cups water and simmer, covered, until just tender, about 12 min. Remove from heat, keep covered 3 min., then fluff with fork.

2. In large bowl, whisk together vinegar, garlic, smoked paprika, 3 Tbsp oil, and 1/2 tsp salt.

3. Heat remaining 1 Tbsp oil in large nonstick skillet on medium. Add tempeh and cook, flipping occasionally until golden brown, 5 to 6 min. Transfer to dressing and toss.

4. Toss in quinoa, then peppers, almonds, parsley, and Manchego. Top with additional almonds and cheese if desired.

Per serving: About 706 cal, 33.5 g fat (5.5 g sat), 15 mg chol, 399 mg sodium, 56 g carb, 7 g fiber, 4.5 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 37 g pro



Side Solve

Meal-prepping grains means all you need the night of consumption is a protein. Make extra quinoa (no tempeh) to stash in the fridge for up to three days.





Fresh Picks

Salads can be made ahead with hearty leaves like cabbage and kale, which will soak up dressing for a few days sans sog.





BROCCOLI AND CHICKEN SALAD WITH MISO DRESSING

TOTAL: 25 MIN. SERVES: 4

- 3 Tbsp white miso
- 1½ tsp honey
- 3 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 3 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 12-oz pkg. broccoli slaw mix
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 2- to 2½-lb rotisserie chicken, skin discarded and meat shredded (about 4 cups, or 1 lb 2 oz)
- 1 cup cilantro, chopped
- 3 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- ½ cup dry-roasted edamame (we used Seapoint Farms)

1. In large bowl, whisk together miso and honey, then gradually whisk in vinegar until smooth. Whisk in both oils and 1 Tbsp water.

2. Add broccoli slaw and onion and toss to coat; fold in chicken, cilantro, and sesame seeds. Serve topped with dry-roasted edamame.

Per serving: About 487 cal, 25.5 g fat (3 g sat), 143 mg chol, 939 mg sodium, 21 g carb, 6 g fiber, 8.5 g sugar (2 g added sugar), 45 g pro

CORN SOUP WITH SHRIMP AND ASPARAGUS

TOTAL: 40 MIN. SERVES: 4

- 1 bunch scallions
- 1½ Tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 16-oz pkg. frozen corn
- 3½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 3 Tbsp nutritional yeast
- ½ lb asparagus, tough ends discarded, very thinly sliced on bias (about 1½ cups)
- 1 lb cooked large shrimp (tails discarded), halved
- 2 Tbsp tarragon leaves, chopped
- Cracked black pepper

1. Thinly slice dark green parts of scallions and set aside for serving; roughly chop remaining parts.

2. Heat oil in medium saucepan on medium. Add white and light green parts of scallions and sauté until beginning to soften, 2 min. Add garlic and corn and sauté 2 min. Add broth and bring to a simmer on high. Reduce heat and simmer 8 min. Remove from heat.

3. Using immersion blender, puree soup 1 min. Add cottage cheese and nutritional yeast and puree until smooth, 1 min. (If making ahead, refrigerate for up to 2 days. When ready to serve, warm on low, pureeing again just to bring it together, then proceed.)

4. Add asparagus and bring to a gentle simmer on medium, about 3 min.; do not let soup boil. Reduce heat to low, stir in shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 2 min. Stir in tarragon and reserved scallion greens. Serve topped with cracked black pepper.

Per serving: About 359 cal, 9 g fat (1 g sat), 233 mg chol, 543 mg sodium, 34 g carb, 6 g fiber, 6 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 40 g pro

RULES OF REHEATING It's best to thaw frozen food in the fridge overnight, then warm it slowly in a pot or pop in the oven for even heating. But if you forgot to think ahead (been there!), nuke dinner on the defrost setting. For soups and stews, microwave in short increments, stirring in between.

Country singer
KELSEA BALLERINI
is working harder
than ever to shake
(and remake)
old patterns that no
longer serve her.
Here, she opens
up about her
intentional journey
and shares her
mental health musts.



G R O W I N G



— F O R W A R D —

BY AMY WILKINSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CALEB & GLADYS

STYLED BY KRISTEN SALADINO

KELSEA BALLERINI

may be one of the most self-aware 31-year-olds on the planet.

Her understanding of self is a consequence, at least in part, of her profession. As a Grammy-nominated artist, Kelsea relies on a readily accessible well of thoughts and feelings to draw upon to articulate her worldview through song. But the rest of that enlightenment, well, that comes from a lot of hard work—work that is evident on her album *Patterns*, out October 25.

“Thematically, this record is a love letter to self-assessment,” Kelsea says, sounding more Nietzsche than Nashville as she explains the inspiration behind her fifth studio effort. For Kelsea, *Patterns* isn’t simply an album title—it’s a call to action as she settles into her 30s, navigating new opportunities and new love.

“I crammed so much life into my 20s, and I’ve done a lot of work to be able to stand by all that life, learn a lot from it, and appreciate all of it for what it’s been,” she says. “[*Patterns*] is about finding the ones that serve you and appreciating and celebrating those, and then finding the ones that don’t—where they come from and how they relate to your interpersonal relationships.”

The ability to recognize and break unhealthy or unfulfilling patterns is a skill Kelsea has spent the past three decades growing into—through mental health practices, like therapy, and slightly more woo-woo interests, like astrology and the occasional visit to a psychic—and it’s one she’s still working on today. “Ironically, self-awareness has not stopped me from doing things that I know are not healthy for me,” she admits ruefully.

AN ONLY CHILD

raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, Kelsea began songwriting at age 12—around the time her parents, Ed and Carla, divorced. As part of her parents’ divorce proceedings, Kelsea attended court-mandated therapy sessions.

She hated it. “I was young, and I was sad and confused, and I didn’t want to talk to a stranger that someone else was making me talk to,” she says.

Her second try at therapy didn’t go much better, given that, once again, it wasn’t of her own choosing. A 14-year-old Kelsea was sent to counseling after witnessing a shooting at her Knoxville high school. Despite the gravity of the situation, Kelsea remained reticent. “Being a Virgo, being very strong-willed, especially when it

comes to things that are tender, like mental health, I need to feel like it’s my decision,” she says.

At 24, having already broken through with her debut album, *The First Time*, a couple years prior, she entered therapy a third time—this time making the decision herself.

“I’d been on the road for four years, and I was exhausted,” she





PREVIOUS SPREAD:

The Frankie Shop shirt, thefrankieshop.com; Retrofete shorts, retrofete.com; Jennifer Fisher hoops, jenniferfisher.com; Bonbonwhims ring, bonbonwhims.com

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Adeam coat, adeam.com; Free People swimsuit, freepeople.com; Calzedonia socks, calzedonia.com; Nike sneakers, nike.com; Jennifer Zeuner earrings, jenniferzeuner.com

THIS PAGE:

The Frankie Shop blazer, thefrankieshop.com; Mara Paris earrings, mara.paris; Selina King ring (left hand), selinaking.com; Erin Fader Jewelry ring (right hand), erinfaderjewelry.com



THIS PAGE:
 Karen Millen bikini top
 and bottoms, karen
 millen.com; Selina King
 hoops, selinaking.com;
 Nette ring (left hand),
 nettejewelry.com;
 Bonbonwhims rings
 (right hand), bonbon
 whims.com



says. “I was married [to Australian country singer Morgan Evans], and I was looking around at all my friends who have 9-to-5 jobs and still live in my hometown, and I was realizing I felt really removed, really different. I was starting to have questions like, *What is driving me? Is missing Mom’s birthday worth it? Am I okay? And am I happy?* I couldn’t answer these fundamental questions I should have been able to answer, so I got back into therapy, by my choice, and fell in love with it.”

Over the years, Kelsea has attended biweekly sessions and also daylong intensives, during which she and her therapist dive deep into issues from Kelsea’s past.

“My therapist asked me to bring in letters, journals, and pictures from my childhood that are significant to me,” she says of one such intensive. “I went in having no idea what I wanted to talk about. I just wanted to dig deeper. We started in the morning, and it lasted seven hours. [By the end], I was exhaust-

ed, but I had a better understanding of a lot of things. I had the time to really untangle them.”

Recently, Kelsea sought her therapist’s guidance for a more pressing issue: insecurity about her upcoming gig as a mentor on *The Voice*, despite having already made several guest appearances on the NBC singing competition series.

“I’ve gotten to the point where, if people don’t like my music, I’m like, ‘Fair enough. Not everything is for everyone,’” she says. “[With *The*



Voice], it was the first time I was putting myself in a position where people are just not going to like *me*.”

When her therapist asked Kelsea how she would approach post-show feedback, she already knew the answer—though she didn’t necessarily like it: She should watch the episodes, critique herself, and ask producers for their notes. She should *not* doomscroll, hunting for negative reviews. “There’s still that little know-it-all in me that has to know the full scope of it,”

she says. But “it’s now on me to choose the right [course of action].”

KELSEA'S KEEN INTEREST

in breaking and remaking patterns extends into nearly every facet of her life—not just her mental health but her physical health too.

When the singer’s star began to rise, in her mid-20s, she enlisted the help of a high-profile personal

trainer (“she trained a lot of the really hot country girls,” Kelsea says) to craft a workout program for her, which took the form of four or five strength-training sessions a week. After five grueling years of work, Kelsea was burned out and parted ways with her trainer professionally, though the two remain friends.

“It almost felt like I was punishing myself to become what I thought I was supposed to be, visually, in my industry,” Kelsea says of her former routine. As a hard reset, she



“

Having a good relationship with how I'm moving my body has changed everything for me.”

stopped working out altogether for a while. Then, over the course of about two years, she began slowly reincorporating physical activities into her life. She dabbled a bit in SoulCycle, which she still attends from time to time, but ultimately fell in love with the Lagree Method—a high-intensity, low-impact workout that incorporates a Megaformer (inspired by the Pilates reformer) to train muscles to fatigue.

“I do it as much as I can,” Kelsea says. “I love how it makes me feel doing it—I feel strong. Having a good relationship with how I’m moving my body has changed everything for me.” (And, not for nothing, she credits the Method with giving her a booty for the first time: “I’m proud of that ass!”) She supplements her three- to four-times-a-week Lagree routine with walking her dogs, among them a nine-year-old labradoodle named Dibs, whom she calls “the love of my life,” who was sadly diagnosed with inoperable cancer in August.

In recent years, Kelsea has also learned the importance of properly fueling her body, whether it be for a sweaty workout, a high-energy performance, or simple day-to-day life. After feeling “a little weird,” she paid a visit to her doc and found out she wasn’t getting enough of two essentials: salt and protein.

“I didn’t realize that you had to have salt to absorb water,” she says. Now she starts her day by mixing LMNT electrolyte powder into her morning glass of water. She’s also upped her protein intake significantly, eating more red meat and carrying a Chomps meat stick in her purse at all times. “Chomps,

cottage cheese, a good steak—that’s my trifecta right now,” she says.

A typical day of eating for Kelsea starts with a couple of scrambled eggs with chimichurri on top, a side of cottage cheese, and blueberries. After drinking her electrolyte water, she’ll have coffee—her namesake brew, Ballerini Blend, from the Original Donut Shop, or a latte. For lunch, she is partial to turkey sandwiches and particular about how they’re constructed. “I do layers of turkey and cheese, with sprouts and tomato,” she says. “On one side, I put a little avocado. On the other, aioli.” (To answer your questions: 1) No, the avocado and aioli never touch. 2) Yes, she likes both sides of the sandwich equally.)

For dinner, Kelsea prepares salmon with zucchini or a skirt steak with asparagus. And, given her Italian surname, it shouldn’t come as too much of a shock that pasta finds its way to her table at least a couple of times a week.

“Cooking feels meditative to me,” Kelsea says. “I’ll put on a podcast or the Rat Pack, and I’ll just disassociate and cook. Making something with your hands, then either eating it to nourish yourself or giving it to friends, feels very grounding to me, so I’ve been doing that a lot more.”

LATELY, KELSEA

has been splitting her time between Nashville and Charleston, South Carolina—the current home and location of *Outer Banks* star Chase Stokes, whom Kelsea has been dating for a little over a year, following her divorce from Evans. He too represents a pattern broken, as Kelsea says she’s never dated someone quite so like herself.

“Chase is also a Virgo, and we’re very kindred in 90 percent of the ways,” Kelsea says. “It’s been such a beautiful journey to figure out how to be in a relationship with someone who’s truly a mirror of you. It’s

taken a lot of really intentional work, and you hear that throughout this new album.”

That said, Kelsea warns not to expect a mushy-gushy love record. “It’s not *not* a record full of love,” she clarifies. “It is, but it’s the nuance of it, and it’s the in-between moments. *How do we get to the happy-go-lucky, mushy-gushy phase?* This is the process, but it took a lot of sorting through baggage together. I think we’re both really proud of that.”

In the Venn diagram of Kelsea’s music and Chase’s acting careers, the couple found an interesting overlap. Kelsea gives Chase advice on acting projects that have a level of musicality to them, and Chase is supporting Kelsea as she prepares for her first meaty acting part—a currently hush-hush role fans will want to keep an eye out for this fall.

“[Acting] was one of the things that I was like, *Run toward the things that scare you!*” Kelsea says. “What if I suck on TV? Then you know what I do? I’ll go put on my glitter and go back onstage. That’s always going to be home base.”

With that solid foundation under her, Kelsea is opening herself up to all the new possibilities coming her way—breaking and remaking patterns, even when it scares her.

“I’m happy, and I’m in control of that happiness,” Kelsea says, reflecting on the new path she’s forging after the divorce and her last EP, *Rolling Up the Welcome Mat*, which chronicled that experience and helped her process it. “I feel grateful to have the people in my life that I do and to be able to put out a record on this level and play the rooms that I’ve always wanted to and also go home to my dogs.”

Understanding what truly nourishes you, body and soul? That might be the greatest knowledge of all, and Kelsea now has it.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Karen Millen swimsuit,
karenmillen.com; Maje
sneakers, us.maje.com;
Jennifer Zeuner
earrings, jennifer
zeuner.com; Selina King
rings, selinaking.com

Hair: Jacob Rozenberg
at The Wall Group using
Pantene, Makeup:
Kelsey Deenihan at The
Wall Group using
CoverGirl, Manicure:
Julie Kandalec at Bryan
Bantry Agency using
Gelish Cream Gel, Set
design: Sarah Caye.




THE RISE
of the
GENTLE
C-SECTION

*How a new surgical practice
is **transforming** women's
childbirth experience*

By
Rachel Somerstein





Photographed by
Joe Lingeman

During her son's birth via C-section in May,

Jenna Jonaitis watched her baby come out of her body. She held him skin-to-skin afterward, then started breastfeeding right away.

Jonaitis had what's known as a "gentle C-section." Compared with standard ones—in which the mother's view is blocked by a drape, she is mostly uninvolved, and the baby and mother often aren't united right away—this modernized version comes with the goal of making cesareans more humane. The family- and patient-centered approach to surgical birth has been practiced in the U.S. for about 15 years but has only recently become more common. Cesareans account for almost one in every three births, and some women find the experience traumatizing or alienating, saying the surgery makes it feel more like a medical experience than a major life event. Gentle C-sections, on the other hand, can help women regain control and agency.

"It was very powerful and emotional," says Jonaitis, a 36-year-old Michigan-based writer, who'd had three previous C-sections that looked very different from this fourth birth. "I was able to be present with this one."

RETHINKING STANDARD PROCEDURE

Developed in the early 2000s in the United Kingdom by an obstetrician, a consultant anesthesiologist, and a midwife, gentle cesareans incorporate aspects of vaginal birth during and after surgery in order to emphasize the mother's participation in the experience and support her relationship with her newborn.

For starters, surgical teams swap out the opaque blue drape—erected to keep the surgical field sterile—for a clear drape, or a drape that has a clear window so the mother can watch the birth. ("No, you won't see

your insides with a clear drape—just the baby as it comes out," Jonaitis explains.) And gentle C-sections often also include placing the baby skin-to-skin with the mother right in the OR, as well as helping mothers breastfeed as soon as possible.


Skin-to-skin and early breastfeeding, which most often occur after vaginal births, can have significant positive health impacts for C-section mothers and their babies. Early physical contact with their baby reduces mothers' chance of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a study in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, and the practice also

promotes mother-child bonding and breastfeeding. For Jonaitis, holding her newborn on her chest also just "made that birth feel real. It made me feel like I really am a mother," she says.

Promoting breastfeeding is especially important for C-section moms because surgical birth can make breastfeeding more difficult. There appear to be a few reasons why this is the case, but experts don't have a full grasp on the exact cause. One factor that seems to come into play is that it's often harder for women to move around after a C-section—which includes getting into a good position for breastfeeding—than after a vaginal birth, and mom and baby are more typically separated during a C-section (which gentle C-sections seek to rectify). Some researchers also think the stress caused by a C-section, especially if the procedure was unplanned, might delay lactogenesis, or the initiation of milk production.


While a gentle C-section relies on the same surgical procedure as a regular C-section, the doctors and nurses try to incorporate practices that keep the connection between mom and baby front of mind. "What you need is a change of attitude," says William R. Camann, MD, director emeritus of obstetric anesthesiology at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "It's just the way [we] behave in the operating room."

To this end, providers might put EKG leads on the mother's side or back, rather than on her chest, and place the blood pressure cuff on her nondominant arm, so she can hold



*“It was very powerful
and **emotional.**
I was able to be
present with this one.”*

Jenna Jonaitis, who had a
gentle C-section with her 4th child



*Giving birth via cesarean
can still be **rich** and
meaningful, and the
mother's experience
can play the central role.*

her newborn (again, getting that early skin-to-skin contact). A nurse might help to steady the baby in the mother's arms or drape a blanket over the baby, because operating rooms are kept quite cold to inhibit bacterial growth.


And while some operating rooms are too small to fit more than one other person inside them (like a spouse or partner), hospitals that practice gentle C-sections may welcome a second support person, like a doula, into the room.

Lauren Cross, who delivered her twins by planned gentle cesarean in 2018 at UC San Diego Health, had a doula who brought essential oils with her. Cross, who'd previously had a traumatic cesarean, was determined to have a "joyful belly birth" this time. Still, she started to shake when she smelled the OR. That's where the doula stepped in, putting peppermint oil on a cotton wool ball for Cross to inhale and giving her a massage through her gown. Cross says she appreciated having "someone there who could support me while my husband was able to be present at his children's birth."



PUTTING A NEW PERSPECTIVE INTO PRACTICE

Not every hospital advertises gentle C-sections, even if providers are willing to adopt some of the practices that make a surgical birth "gentle." But asking about this option, and even specifying details such as what music will be played in the OR, is important, says Emily Likins-Ehlers, a doula in Illinois who works with C-section mothers. Some mothers, Likins-Ehlers says, may feel that "if you end up in the operating room, you have abdicated



all of your power." But making these requests—and seeing them honored—can restore a mother's sense of agency. Jonaitis certainly felt that way. "These things helped the birth feel 'more my own,'" she says.

And while you can plan for a scheduled cesarean, unplanned C-sections still happen—and can be chaotic, scary, and overwhelming. But it may still be possible to have skin-to-skin contact and

early breastfeeding, provided that both mother and baby are stable, Dr. Camann says.

Perhaps most critical is talking to your provider during prenatal care about what is most important in your birth experience, says Erica Holland, MD, an ob-gyn at Boston Medical Center, where gentle C-sections are her typical standard of care. She recalls a woman who'd expressed concern about being



physically exposed while undergoing a planned C-section. So, when Dr. Holland's surgical team placed the woman's catheter, her gown was pushed only above her knees, rather than up to her waist. That small yet extremely meaningful action represents a type of patient-centered care that should be the goal—not only during gentle cesareans, but whenever possible, Dr. Holland says.

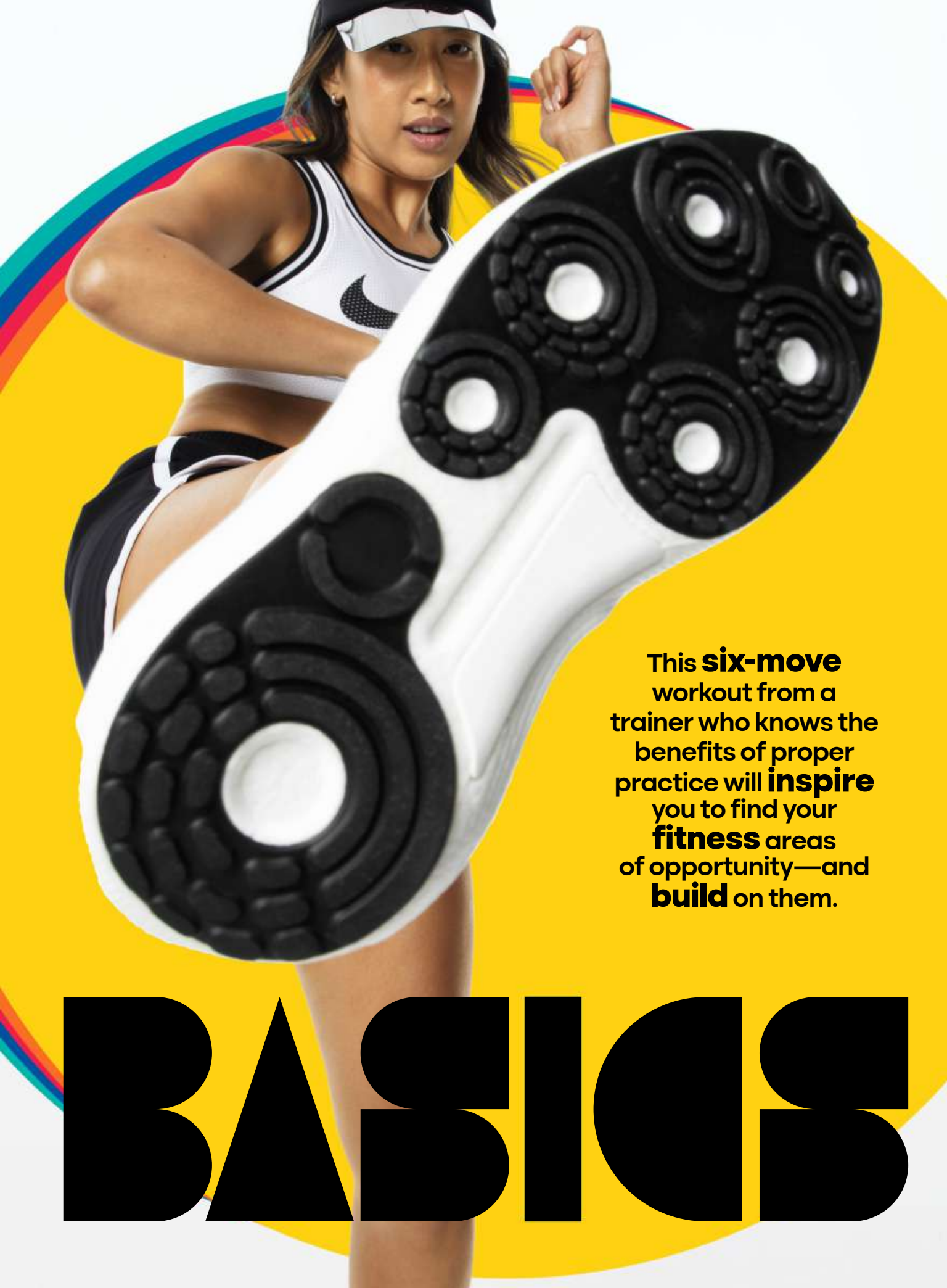
Dr. Holland asks moms who need to undergo an unexpected cesarean, and who may feel a “sense of loss that they're not going to have the experience they wanted,” which parts of the birth feel most important and which of those can be carried into the OR. It's a reminder that birth via cesarean can still be rich and meaningful, and that the mother's experience can play the central role.

Rachel Somerstein is a journalist whose new book, *Invisible Labor: The Untold Story of the Cesarean Section*, examines the state of maternal health care in the U.S. and explores alternatives to the current standard of care, including a new method of cesarean called a “gentle C-section.” Somerstein was inspired to research and write the book after her own experience with a complicated, unplanned C-section with her first child.




By **Caitlin Carlson**
Photographed by **Eli Schmidt**
Styled by **Rose Lauture**

BACK to the



This **six-move** workout from a trainer who knows the benefits of proper practice will **inspire** you to find your **fitness** areas of opportunity—and **build** on them.

BASICS



From your Instagram and TikTok feeds to the yoga studio and weight room, there's no shortage of fitness #inspo these days. And when Claudette Sariya, a certified personal trainer, worked in influencer marketing as her day-time grind, she saw a lot of advanced content (think: a pistol squat; a yoga handstand) being created by people who weren't necessarily qualified to teach it to their followers.

"When you're showcasing what you can do, but you're not breaking it down, it can be a little bit dangerous for those who try to imitate you, because they're not understanding how to activate the right muscles," says Sariya.

Fast-forward a few years, and Sariya decided to leave the corporate world and take a "life-changing" chance on going full-time in fitness, making it her mission to prioritize safety and efficiency in her clients' workouts.

Sariya also leads group runs for the Asian Women Stay Running (AWSTARS) club, where the goal is longevity, but not in the biohacking bro way you might think when you hear that word. Instead, they're looking to pair running with strength training so they can keep chasing their kids (and grandkids) around the backyard—or, in one woman's case, go on some of her daughter's marathon training runs.

In addition to the weekly jogs, Sariya leads strength training classes for the participants, focusing on simple movements. "Bringing it back to basics not only helps them learn how to move safely but also helps them build a foundation where they can stand proudly and more confidently as they embark on their fitness journey," she says.

AWSTARS was, in part, inspired by Sariya's participation in the Strength in Diversity program, a *Women's Health/Men's Health* initiative that offers trainers from marginalized communities the chance to be mentored by elite fitness professionals and gain knowledge and skills from leaders across the industry. "My life completely changed after getting into the program," she says. "It opened up my eyes to so many different ways that I can build on my experience in fitness."

And now, she's using that knowledge and experience to help you: 1) get a fantastic full-body workout, and 2) safely work toward more advanced variations with this six-move routine that she created for *WH*. "I wanted to make sure we targeted every muscle group in here, but I kept it very simple so it's as easy to build up as it is to break down," she says. Let's go!



“
**Bringing it
back to basics helps
people create a
foundation they can
stand upon.**
”

Group Inspo

Find Sariya and
her crew on IG:
@awstars_nyc

**PREVIOUS
SPREAD:**

Nike sports bra, [nike.com](https://www.nike.com); Beyond Yoga shorts, [beyondyoga.com](https://www.beyondyoga.com); Under Armour sneakers, [underarmour.com](https://www.underarmour.com); Alo visor, [aloyoga.com](https://www.aloyoga.com); Machete hoops, [shopmachete.com](https://www.shopmachete.com); Casio watch, [casio.com](https://www.casio.com); Bombas socks, [bombas.com](https://www.bombas.com)

THIS PAGE:

FP Movement bra and shorts, [fpmovement.com](https://www.fpmovement.com); Los Angeles Apparel shorts (worn underneath), [losangelesapparel.net](https://www.losangelesapparel.net); Nike sneakers, [nike.com](https://www.nike.com); Machete hoops, [shopmachete.com](https://www.shopmachete.com)

TOTAL-BODY BUILD

How-to Complete 3 or 4 sets of 8 to 12 reps of each move, resting for 20 to 30 seconds between sets. If you can do more than 12 (good!) reps in 30 to 40 seconds, you should go up in weight. If you struggle to reach 8, you should go down. When you feel confident, consider trying the Level Up progression.



Squat and Clean

Why it rocks: "This full-body exercise is a powerhouse," Sariya says. It targets hamstrings, glutes, core, calves, shoulders, back, and biceps to build strength, and it also improves explosive power. Plus: "You'll feel like a badass when you complete a set of these!"



How-to: Holding dumbbells by your sides, squat down until thighs are parallel to the floor (A). Drive through heels to stand, zipping dumbbells up along your sides (B) and catching them at your shoulders (C); finish by lowering into a squat (D). That's 1 rep. Lower the DBs to stand and repeat.



LEVEL UP: To complete a snatch, pull the dumbbell up along your midline with the elbow leading, then complete the pull with your arm shooting straight toward the ceiling in an outstretched position. It should feel as if you're about to punch the dumbbell into the ceiling.



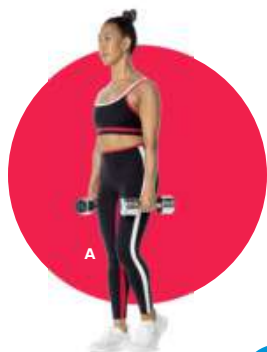
Tricep Pushup

Why it rocks: Compared with a regular pushup, this version keeps your elbows tight against your sides to help isolate and activate your triceps (instead of your chest) as you push yourself up from the floor, Sariya says.

How-to: Start in a high plank position, with wrists and shoulders stacked (A). (To regress the move, place your hands on a bench, which shifts your center of gravity and gives you more leverage.) Your body should be long and

straight, with your glutes and core engaged. From this position, lower your chest toward the floor with control, keeping your elbows tight to your sides (B). From there, immediately push back up to return to start. That's 1 rep.

LEVEL UP: Hold yourself at the bottom of the pushup, chest about two to three inches off the floor, for a couple of seconds.



pro tip

Feeling tension in the hamstrings and the glutes is a sign that you're hitting an optimal range of motion.

B-Stance Deadlift

Why it rocks: "Taking a B-stance, where one foot is in a kickstand position, will help you target your glutes in the working leg because you won't have to worry about your balance as much." People often don't do the more advanced version of this move, the single-leg Romanian deadlift (RDL), properly, because their hips open to the side instead of pointing straight down, says Sariya.

How-to: Stand with your feet together, a dumbbell in each hand. Slide one foot back so the front toe is in line with the back heel of the other foot. Lift the heel of the back foot up (A). From here, hinge forward, keeping a soft bend in the knees and pushing your hips behind you. Keep your shoulders down and maintain a flat back as you trace the dumbbells down the front of your standing leg (B). Reverse movement to return to start. That's 1 rep. Complete all reps on this side, then repeat on the other.

LEVEL UP: Once you feel more confident and have more core stability, then take on a single-leg RDL.

ABLE WORKOUT



Reverse Lunge and Press

Why it rocks: "This dual-part move will strengthen the glutes, quads, and shoulders while improving your overall balance," says Sariya. Tuck your pelvis to activate your glutes and avoid the common misstep of hyperextending your lower back.

How-to: Step back with your right leg and drop your knee so it's an inch or two off the floor and forming a 90-degree angle. Engage your core and stay in this position as you press the dumbbell up above your shoulder (A). Return the dumbbell to a front racked position, then return to your standing position (B). Repeat on the other side. That's 1 rep.



LEVEL UP: Turn it into a clean and press while you lunge, or turn it into a snatch.



pro tip

If you feel pain or instability when attempting a new exercise, that's a clear sign to drop the weight or regress the movement.



Renegade Row

Why it rocks: "This is one of my favorite moves for improving core strength and stability while working the upper-back muscles and arms," says Sariya. "Often, I'll see a twist of the torso or a rocking of the hips, but you want to keep the hips as still as possible so you can

focus on stabilizing your core."

How-to: Start in a high plank position with each hand resting on a dumbbell (A). (To regress the move, start on your knees.) Your feet should be in a wider stance to keep you balanced, and your core and

glutes should be engaged. Keeping your body as still as possible, pull one dumbbell toward the bottom of your rib cage (B). Your hips should be so still that if there were a cup of coffee on your lower back, it wouldn't spill. Repeat with the other arm. That's 1 rep.

LEVEL UP: Add a pushup after each rep.



Bicycles

Why it rocks: To really target the abs, you have to slow the classic bicycle crunch down, using time under tension and finding resistance with your legs as levers, says Sariya. While this is a "really simple move," Sariya says people often do it too quickly. "I see them flying through their bicycles, making it more cardio than strength."

How-to: Lie flat on your back with fingertips behind ears and elbows wide. Bring your legs up to a tabletop position, then lift shoulder blades and head off the floor and twist your torso, bringing opposite elbow to opposite knee as you extend the other leg straight (A). Repeat on the other side (B). That's 1 rep. Continue alternating.

LEVEL UP: Pause at the top of each twist to feel more of a burn.

make this your YEAR

Take inspiration from Sariya, who changed her fitness "why" after a toxic relationship ended in 2016. "It shifted from aesthetics to empowering myself. Fitness helped me reclaim my power." That's why her IG handle is @yearofclau~~de~~. But fast-forward and the original 365-day promise to prioritize herself turned into an eight-year (and counting!) mantra that extends to motivating others to do the same. "You can't pour into other cups if your cup is empty," she says.



Go for It

It's never too late to shift your path, like Sariya.

PREVIOUS SPREAD:

Splits59 bra and leggings, splits59.com; Hoka sneakers, hoka.com; Mejuri hoops, mejuri.com

THIS PAGE:

Los Angeles Apparel pullover, losangelesapparel.net; Splits59 bra and leggings, splits59.com; Hoka sneakers, hoka.com; Mejuri hoops, mejuri.com.

Hair: Anike Rabilu. Makeup: Magdalena Major.



Taylor Beebe

Castro Valley, CA | @taylorannebb15

"Everyone deserves to take up space in the gym and can benefit from the confidence it breeds."



Meet Your New Favorite Trainers

The future of fitness is so bright! Follow Strength in Diversity's class of 2024 on Instagram for even more workouts and wisdom.



Tonyael Miller

Chicago, IL | @tonyaelm

"My goal is to help moms and caregivers of color rediscover their happiness and take charge of their health."



Tyneka Pack

Baltimore, MD | @tdeniise

"I want to change this 'weight loss only' narrative to 'healthy generational habits.'"



Jordan Farrell

Knightdale, NC | @jordanalexiss

"Every time we show up to work toward our fitness goals, we have the opportunity to learn about ourselves."



Gabrielle Savary

New York, NY | @growwithgab_x

"Seeing clients excel in their fitness journey is a plus, but the best part is when it helps them level up in life."

Plus: The Guys! See more of these faces in the pages of *Men's Health*.



PIO-FRANCO BADAJOS

New York, NY | @francofit24.7

"I'd like to help make access to real training knowledge a more simplified process."



BRANDON CHU

New York, NY | @justbchu

"I want to help change people's lives in a positive way—not just in a physical sense."



QUINCY FRANCE

New York, NY | @qfrance

"When something doesn't exist that I feel is beneficial, I create it and implement it."



CHICO HUGGINS

Boston, MA | @chicohuggins

"I'd like to create spaces where clients and trainers can be their true selves."



JEROD NIEDER

Louisville, KY

@positivelyparalyzed
"I want to redefine what it means to be fit."





THE WOMEN'S HEALTH
BEAUTY TEAM—AND
A PANEL OF ESTEEMED
EXPERTS—SELECTED
THE BEST PRODUCTS
FOR ALL COMPLEXION
TYPES, TONES, AND
CONCERNS FOR
THE **2024 SKINCARE**
AWARDS. YOUR
ROUTINE IS ABOUT TO
GET A SERIOUS LIFT!

SKINCARE GOALS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ELI SCHMIDT



With so many skin-care products dropping daily, it can be tough to pinpoint the formulas that will work for you. So, the winners of this year's *Women's Health* Skincare Awards are all about simplicity: They were selected based on the hallmarks of a solid, unfussy routine, then tested and vetted by our beauty team and a group of experts. They're a pleasure to use and deliver noticeable results. Meet your complexion obsessions.



Best Body Sunscreen

This mineral lotion locks in moisture without stickiness. "It blends in really well," says *WH* Beauty Director Brian Underwood. "And the fragrance? Heaven-scent." **Sol de Janeiro Rio Radiance SPF 50 Body Lotion**, \$30, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

moisturize & protect



HYDRATION
HEAVY-
WEIGHTS AND
NONGREASY
SPFS THAT
SOFTEN
AND SHIELD
SKIN



Best Tinted Moisturizer
"It lightly fills in pores and fine lines—just apply with your fingers," says *WH* Senior Beauty Editor Danielle Jackson.
Rare Beauty Positive Light Tinted Moisturizer, \$30, rarebeauty.com



Best Chemical Sunscreen
Dermatologist Mina Amin, MD, says her favorite thing about this hydrating SPF is how easily it blends without pilling.
La Roche-Posay Anthelios UV Hydra Sunscreen SPF 50, \$40, ulta.com



Best Night Cream
"It adds so much moisture back into my face, and it never makes my combination skin feel oily or heavy," says Jackson.
Tula Skincare 24-7 Moisture Hydrating Day & Night Cream, \$88, ulta.com



Best Moisturizer for Dry Skin
A velvety blend of rose extract and salicylic acid that minimizes the appearance of fine lines and other signs of aging. Pricy but worth the splurge.
Lancôme Absolue L'Extrait Elixir Cream, \$450, lancome-usa.com



Best Mineral Sunscreen
"Super gentle, it blends into all skin tones," says dermatologist Wallace Nozile, MD. Also: antioxidants for more protection.
Colorescience No-Show Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50, \$45, amazon.com



Best Body Lotion
Here, seaweed extract works with spirulina and vitamin E to soothe. "It keeps skin soft, smooth, and moisturized," says product formulator Mary Berry.
Salt & Stone Body Lotion, \$20, saltandstone.com



Best Foot Cream
Dr. Nozile confirms that it has all the elements—like exfoliating lactic acid to help shed dead skin—to leave cracked heels feeling "bright and new."
Eucerin Advanced Repair Cream, \$10, amazon.com



Best Eye Cream
A splurge, but to Dr. Amin, the results are worth the 50 bucks: "It contains vitamin C to brighten, and caffeine to depuff."
Philosophy Dose of Wisdom Dark Circle Brightening Eye Cream, \$56, ulta.com

CLEANSE

Wash the day away with powerhouses that are tough on dirt, oil, and makeup, but gentle on skin.



Best Foaming Cleanser
These vitamin C-based tabs are meant to brighten. Plus, "they're waterless, making them great for travel," says Underwood.
Olay Cleansing Melts + Vitamin C, \$10, olay.com



Best Gel Cleanser
"The gel texture transforms into a light froth that cleanses without stripping," Underwood says of this deep-cleaning wash that goes beyond the surface.
Saint Jane Pore Clarity Cleanser, \$36, saintjanebeauty.com



Best Cleansing Balm
Developed with oily and acne-prone types in mind, the rich balm eliminates grime without a trace of residue—and won't clog pores either.
Hero Cosmetics Dissolve Away Daily Cleansing Balm, \$18, ulta.com



Best Body Wash
What starts as a luxurious oil lathers into a rich foam to give you the ultimate relaxing shower experience.
Naturium The Glow Getter Multi-Oil Body Wash, \$16, amazon.com



It looks like space ooze but is an affordable at-home peel.

tone & exfoliate

A GROUP OF GLOW-GETTERS THAT WORK HARD TO GIVE YOU A RADIANCE BOOST



Best Dark Spot Treatment

The gentle exfoliator sloughs away dullness and discoloration—in just 15 minutes—with glycolic, lactic, mandelic, and salicylic acids. **L'Oréal Paris Bright Reveal Dark Spot Exfoliant Peel**, \$25, ulta.com



Best Toner

This toner smooths wrinkles, boosts skin elasticity, and improves tone. "I was truly impressed by how hydrated and dewy it left my skin," says aesthetician Joie Tavernise. **Environ Youth EssentiA Vita-Peptide Toner**, \$80, joannaczech.com



Best Peel

Treat skin that's prone to acne or dark spots with this gentle daily peel. The resveratrol and green tea extract protect against free radical assaults to prevent future damage. **Dr. Dennis Gross Alpha Beta Extra Strength Daily Peel**, \$92, sephora.com



Best Face Scrub

Activate the scrub with water to customize your exfoliation level. "It ingeniously softens my skin without being too abrasive," says Jackson. **Benefit Cosmetics The Pore Polish Triple Pore-Exfoliating Powder**, \$49, ulta.com



Best Lip Scrub

"Even as a beauty editor, I allowed my lips to get so dry that they were peeling," says Jackson. "But the micro sugar crystals in this scrub got rid of my dead skin almost instantly." **Makeup by Mario Perfecting Lip Scrub**, \$24, sephora.com

STYLING: ROSE LAUTURE; HAIR AND MAKEUP: CLAUDIA LAKE FOR CHANEL; JENNY BIRD HOOPS; MONICA VINADER RING (LEFT HAND); MEUR RING (RIGHT HAND)



Best Serum

Designed to mimic the effects of Botox, this formula is packed with peptides, a gentle exfoliant, and niacinamide to tackle discoloration and fortify skin's barrier. **SkinCeuticals P-Tiox Anti-Wrinkle Serum**, \$148, dermstore.com



Best Retinol

Retinol and yeast-derived Malassezin combine to tackle hyperpigmentation and fine lines. "What I like most about the product is how gentle it is," says Underwood. **Mother Science Retinol Synergist**, \$96, motherscience.com



Best Acne Treatment

Salicylic acid can be irritating, but this water-soluble version is easier on skin. Also: "I can layer it without having any reactions," says Underwood. **ZO Skin Health Complexion Clarifying Serum**, \$110, zoskinhealth.com

EXTRAS

Turn to these when your complexion needs oomph.



Best Face Oil

Per Dr. Amin, it's nonirritating and locks in moisture. **Drunk Elephant Virgin Marula Luxury Facial Oil**, \$69, sephora.com



Best Lip Balm

"It deeply hydrates and smooths my lips, leaving them soft and supple," raves Berry. **Laneige Lip Glowly Balm**, \$19, sephora.com

treat

FROM CLEARING STUBBORN ACNE TO ELIMINATING PESKY INGROWNS, THESE INNOVATIVE FORMULAS ARE TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE.



Best Body Acne Treatment

A face wash that doubles as an all-over treatment. "I have folliculitis, and this always helps," says WH Beauty Assistant Sabrina Talbert. **CeraVe Acne Foaming Cream Cleanser**, \$18, amazon.com



Best Ingrown-Hair Treatment

Slough away the dead skin that can trap hair underneath the surface after shaving. "I noticed significantly fewer bumps between shaves," says Talbert. **First Aid Beauty Ingrown Hair Pads**, \$36, ulta.com



Best Keratosis Pilaris Treatment

These tiny bumps are notoriously tough to treat. Dr. Amin's solution is this blend of "urea, retinol, and lactic acid, which gently exfoliate the skin." **Remedy For Body Bumps**, \$28, remedyskin.com

Best Deodorant

"I used this aluminum-free cream deodorant during a recent workout, and it kept me feeling fresh and odor-free for hours," says Jackson. **Dove Whole Body Deodorant Cream**, \$12, amazon.com



MEET THE EXPERTS!

Mary Berry is a skin-care formulator and the founder and CEO of Cosmos Labs. **Mina Amin, MD**, is a board-certified dermatologist in Los Angeles. **Joie Tavernise** is an aesthetician and the founder of JTAV Clinical Skincare. **Wallace Nozile, MD**, is a board-certified dermatologist in Atlanta. **Cayli Cavaco Reck** is the founder of Knockout Beauty. **Brian Underwood** is the beauty director at Women's Health. **Danielle Jackson** is the senior beauty editor at Women's Health. **Sabrina Talbert** is the beauty assistant at Women's Health.

Victoria Garrick Browne destigmatizes the convo around mental health with her *RealPod*.



A former D-I volleyball player, Garrick Browne shared her struggles with anxiety and depression in a TEDx talk during her sophomore year in 2017.

1 / First thing you do when you wake up?

When my Hatch alarm clock goes off, I take a deep breath and look around my room. I like to take a minute or two of presence and calmness.

2 / Person who inspires you?

My older brother, Jonathan, who was a Division I and professional golfer. His dedication showed me what it meant to work hard at something I loved.

3 / Fave post-workout food?

A peanut butter and chocolate protein smoothie!

4 / Proudest moment?

When my nonprofit, The Hidden Opponent, signed our partnership with Adidas. Our mission is to support athletes struggling with mental health, and this opportunity allows us to scale.

5 / Fave hype-up song?

I have a playlist called "Victoria Energy" where I put songs that make me feel the way I want to feel: excited. I love "Delicate (Seeb Remix)" by Taylor Swift.

6 / Go-to mantra?

I have two. The first one, my husband and I say to each other: "It's not that deep." The second is: "You have to trust in yourself that the future—you will figure it out."

7 / Last time you felt on top of the world?

When I met Travis Kelce.

8 / Last thing you bought?

An iced oat milk matcha latte with vanilla. I wasn't always a coffee girl (maybe I still can't say I am?), but it's delicious.

9 / Last trip you took?

Paris for the Olympic Games! We watched our friends compete in beach volleyball. It was surreal!



Therapy FTW It's not a weakness to deal with a mental health issue. It's human to deal with a mental health issue. I'm not less-than for seeking help. I'm actually incredibly brave, strong, and ambitious. We're encouraged to work extra hard to master our craft, and it should be the same when we're going to work on ourselves—in our mind, in our hearts.

Glucerna

made with  **TO HELP MANAGE BLOOD SUGAR RESPONSE***



Glucerna® products are guaranteed delicious, or your money back!†

SCAN FOR UP TO **\$80** IN SAVINGS AND BENEFITS*
or visit glucerna.com/PTP80



Use as part of a diabetes management plan.

* Helps minimize the blood sugar spike from consuming Glucerna compared to high-glycemic carbohydrates.

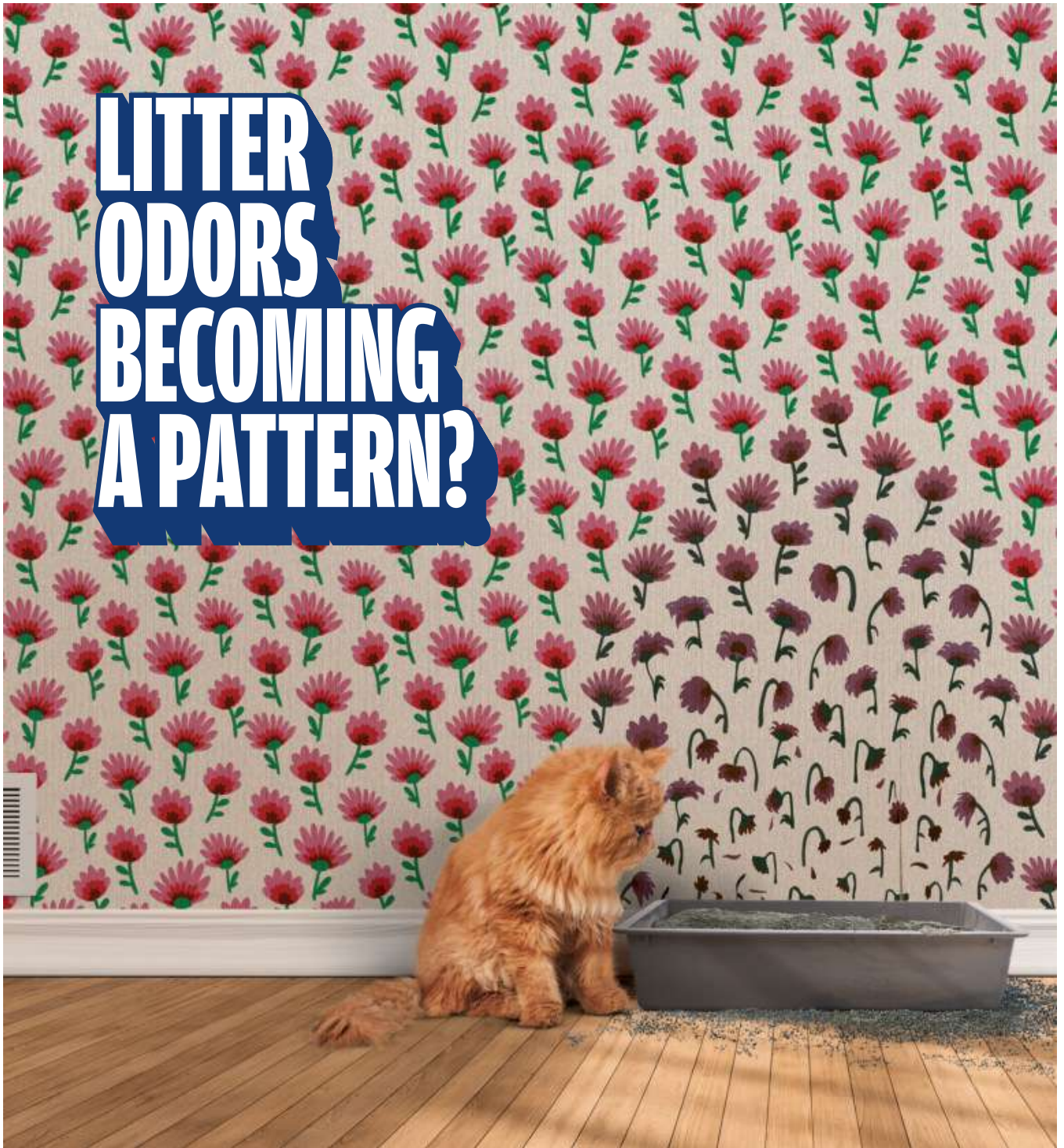
† Great Taste Guarantee! If you don't agree, just mail in the UPC from your Glucerna packaging, original receipt, and your name/address within 30 days for a refund. REFUND NOT TO EXCEED NORMAL RETAIL PRICE. US PURCHASES ONLY. LIMIT ONE REFUND PER HOUSEHOLD. Additional restrictions apply. Visit glucerna.com or call 1-800-986-8501 for complete details. Void where prohibited.

‡ Offers may vary. Valuation based on maximum collective savings of offers throughout duration of program.

©2024 Abbott 202417548/April 2024 LITHO IN USA



LITTER ODORS BECOMING A PATTERN?



STEP IT UP

Step up your litter game with fast-acting, long-lasting odor control.

