

UNLOCK THE HAPPINESS

FORMULA

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PHOTOGRAPHS DAVID OLDHAM

There's no magic bullet when it comes to happiness. Or is there? A raft of new treatments from exercise to injectables now promise to boost mood. But do they? Grazia investigates...

THERE ARE INSTAGRAM FEEDS that preach it, schools that teach it, studies that research it and beauty treatments that promise it... but how easy is it to find happiness? A study conducted by Mintel reveals close to 100% of us say mental health is now as important as physical health. And it's this newfound holistic attitude that's driving a boom in wellness brands across the globe. At the Global Wellness Summit in Palm Beach, Florida, mindfulness therapies were cited as the top trend expected to grow exponentially over the next decade, with predictions that meditation bars like LA's Unplug could soon be as common a destination for mood-lifting as a trip to the gym. In a bid to crack the calming code, we tried, cried and ate our way through eight happiness therapies. But did our moods improve?

ON TRIAL:

EXPLORATION WORKOUTS

with personal trainer and fitness influencer Sophie Everard



Tester Rose Beer, health & beauty director

What's the drill? 'Sophie alternated between a day of sport, such as wild swimming, climbing or boxing, and a day of strength training. Most of the sessions were outdoors as Sophie believes happiness comes from making exercise an adventure and connecting with nature. Research also shows that the colour green (like trees, grass and other plants) makes exercise feel easier, too. From circuit training in Fulham to swimming front and back crawl in the Hampstead Heath ponds, I also took up spinning and went climbing – my body was challenged and my mind felt fully engaged.'

Feel-good factor 'Changing up my workouts and coming out of my comfort zone was a real revelation. It allowed me to completely switch off from work and drama with friends. My brain was solely concentrating on my body for the first time and that definitely had a positive effect. Overall, I had more resilience; I was noticeably calmer and less anxious. I felt stronger and braver too – every session left me feeling epic!'

How to book Sessions cost £70 an hour, £350 for five, or £650 for 10. Sophie also leads retreats, with surfing, horse riding and trail running; madtoliveblog.com. ▶



ON TRIAL:
MINDFULNESS

with Terrence The Teacher at Harrods' Wellness Clinic



Tester Lisa Howard, production director
What's the drill? 'Over three one-hour sessions, Terrence guided me through seven breathing exercises. I sat with my hands on my knees, eyes closed, against a backdrop of gentle music, a calming orange glow and soothing aroma. The key is to breathe through the belly, like we do as babies, and bring your attention to your breath without judgement.'

Feel-good factor 'Terrence taught me "mindful living" techniques, such as appreciating a particular colour, or putting my attention into the physical sensations of daily tasks when I felt a sudden sorrow or stress. I did this during my commute, at work and at home, too. The more I practised, the better I felt – remembering to keep it up was the tricky part. I definitely felt a feel-good factor at the end of a session, but a week after the last one I'd veered off track slightly – regular appointments would be beneficial.'

How to book A one-hour Introduction To Mindfulness (from 1 Sept) costs £300, Harrods. Call 020 7225 5678; email thewellnessclinic@harrods.com.

ON TRIAL:
FIVE ELEMENT ACUPUNCTURE
with Ross J Barr



Tester Melissa Henry, editorial assistant & digital sub editor

What's the drill?

'Ross began by asking questions about my emotional state. I'd just been to a festival, so I was still feeling the effects of drinking and dancing all night, as well as the stress of everyday city life. As I lay down, he inserted the needles one by one, starting at my feet, and asked me to identify areas that were painful. Quickly, he recognised that I have a hot liver, and I was astounded he knew I was waking up between 1 and 3am while I slept, as this is the time when the liver detoxes. I also felt pain in my back and shoulders.'

Feel-good factor 'While the needles were uncomfortable, the experience brought me more in tune with my emotions. I felt at peace with myself and the tension in my neck and shoulders had virtually gone. I felt happier after just one session, but attending more would offer even more benefits.'

How to book 45 mins costs £80. Visit rossbarr.com. Email acupuncture@rossbarr.com. App: rossbarr.gappt.com.

ON TRIAL:
BOTOX

with Dr Michael J Prager



Tester Laura Antonia Jordan, fashion news & features editor

What's the

drill? 'Research has shown that Botox on frown lines can curb depression. I think mine make me appear scowly and bitchy, which has affected my self-esteem. Michael explained that the motion of frowning creates a negative emotion, so when that muscle is relaxed, and you can no longer frown, it can actually make you feel happier. Michael asked me to frown then, as I relaxed, he injected my lines. It was quick and less painful than expected.'

Feel-good factor 'My frown lines have gone but I still have movement in my forehead, so it's not obvious. Several people mentioned how radiant I look. I do feel happier – it sounds crazy, but not being able to scrunch up my face so much works! Botox is something I never thought I needed, but I will definitely book in again when the effects fade.'

How to book From £595. Visit drmichaelprager.com. ■