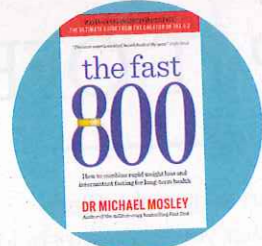


HEALTH notebook

PICK OF THE MONTH



HEALTHY FASTING

Looking for a clinically proven weight-loss plan? Check out Michael Mosley's new book *The Fast 800* (Short Books, £8.99), which shares the method he used to reverse his own diabetes. Try the digital lifestyle programme, too. Find out more at thefast800.com.

NATURAL HEALTH Q&A



Q What is the best way to balance my hormones?

All women experience hormone fluctuations, but the number of

women with hormone imbalances is on the rise. A holistic approach can balance hormones effectively.

Eat real food: choose local, seasonal, preferably organic, minimally packaged/processed and freshly prepared. Your gut is crucial to hormone health, so eat fermented foods (kefir, sauerkraut, yoghurt, miso) and fibre, and drink water to support gut flora and bowel movements.

High-fibre foods: eat more organic vegetables, fruit, chia and flax seeds and whole rolled oats.

Detox your world: try to avoid xenoestrogens (synthetic hormones in food packaging, skincare, personal care and cleaning products).

Destress: love your liver and your adrenals – avoid alcohol, caffeine and stress, reduce screen time, walk in nature, practise sleep hygiene and avoid electromagnetic frequencies.

Naturopath Elle Fox is a CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine) graduate, author and speaker. CNM trains students for careers in natural therapies; naturopathy-uk.com



GET UP EVERY 30 MINS

We've known for a while that sitting for long hours is bad for our health, but now researchers from Columbia University in New York have discovered that short standing breaks can counteract the risks. In a study in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, scientists tracked 7,999 people and recorded the amount of physical activity they did each day, and the intensity of the exercise. They found substituting 30 minutes of sitting with low-intensity exercise could reduce early death risk by 17 per cent, or by 35 per cent for moderate- to high-intensity workouts.

22mins the UK's average lunch break. Take a full hour and you'll achieve much more in the afternoon!

LOVE YOUR BODY

Women are more familiar with men's bodies than their own according to UK gynaecological cancer charity, Eve Appeal. So maybe it's time to get to know your body better and understand what gives you pleasure. The Soda Says (sodasays.co.uk) Sex Edit is a collection of six sex toys to help you reclaim your sexuality, including Bean (pictured, £29; for beginners to the art of self-pleasuring), Fireman (£39.95; for clitoral stimulation) and Tennis Coach (£39.95; to help you locate your G-spot). Happy experimenting!



WORDS: Eve Boggenpoel PHOTOGRAPHY: iStock

22 mins
word

Your mother's experience and insights about you could be the key to your freedom, says Eve Boggenpoel

Sometimes life's most valuable lessons occur at the most unexpected times. Joking with a psychologist friend as I retold a recent event, she interrupted our laughter to ask why I had behaved the way I did. My answer came straight from the heart and brought us both close to tears. It was one of those moments when an unfamiliar truth pierces so deeply it stops you in your tracks, creating a space for you to reconsider whether previously instinctive ways of reacting still serve you. The motive for my behaviour, it transpired, was connected to my mother – nothing surprising there, you might say – but she had passed away 14 years ago, and it was astounding to realise the influence she still had on my everyday actions.

Understanding our relationship with our mother, the impact it has on us and, ultimately, breaking free from it and stepping into our own individuality, is one of life's primary psychological tasks. Which is why *Mum, Tell Me: A Give and Get Back Book* by Elma Van Vlet (Particular Books, £16.99) can be such a useful resource on your self-development path. Van Vlet created the book after learning that her mother was terminally ill and realising that there were still a great many things she wanted to ask her mother about her life.

ASK AWAY

Mum, Tell Me is a beautiful, journal-style book that offers a series of questions for your mother to reflect on and write about,



from 'What were her childhood dreams?' to 'What is the biggest difference between who she is now and who she used to be?' It's a book for your mother to take time over, and a wonderful opportunity for her not only to reflect on her own life but to share her intimate knowledge of you as a child and teenager in a way that, when she gives the journal back to you (hence the 'Give and Get Back Book' of the title) can become a rich resource for your own self-understanding.

TAILOR YOUR JOURNAL

You can use Van Vlet's book as it is or, if you want to create your own version, tailored to your own circumstances, here are some suggestions to get you started.

Spend a few moments connecting to your breath to quieten your mind and help you attune to a deeper aspect of yourself, then begin to note down any areas of your past that a better understanding of might help you live your life more meaningfully.

You may want to take a linear approach, looking at key life stages such as what your

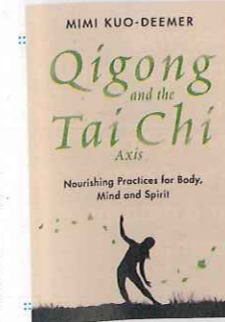
birth was like, how you experienced your first few days at school or how you acted around your first boyfriend. Or you could keep it more experience-based, for example, what made you happiest as a child or were there any difficult childhood experiences she thinks still influence your behaviour now?

BECOME MORE AWARE

It's also helpful to reverse the thinking – choosing areas you currently struggle with, such as having a voice or being overly competitive, and asking your mother to comment on similar traits you had as a child and what was happening in your life at the time. You could even ask her if there's anything she notices in your life now that she thinks you're unaware of.

As children and teenagers we spent much of our time disagreeing with our mothers, trying to assert our own identity, but as we feel more secure in who we are, maybe we can be more open to the wealth of experience and wisdom our mothers have to share with us.

SHELF HELP



Each issue, we bring you the best advice from the latest self-help books

This month, we look at *Qigong and the Tai Chi Axis* by Mimi Kuo-Deemer (Orion, £14.99)

In a nutshell: Qigong focuses on flowing movements linked to the Chinese five elements. It's a beautiful

tool for emotional growth. The Wood element, for example, nourishes your roots and provides fertile ground to nurture your dreams; Fire nourishes the heart and enriches your relationship with yourself and others,

while Water nourishes your wisdom. **A nugget:** 'Nature's capacity for homeostasis and balance is qigong's model for health... problems arise when our elements are out of balance.'