

Your winter HEALTH SQUAD

MAKE 2011 THE YEAR YOU STAY FIGHTING FIT, WITH THE HELP OF FOUR EXPERTS WHO PRACTISE WHAT THEY PREACH

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THE SPA GENIUS

If you're lucky enough to have had an Ayurvedic treatment at Cornwall's The Scarlet hotel, The Sanctuary in London or Solas Croi Eco Spa in Ireland, chances are you've already been touched by the genius of Sunita Passi. Long the go-to woman for authentic Ayurvedic treatments, next year Passi's bringing Ayurvedic meditation to the mainstream via de-stress courses (tri-dosha.co.uk). The granddaughter of an Ayurvedic doctor, Passi spent time in India exploring the subject. 'I'd grown up with it, but it had never really been explained to me,' she says. What she learnt gave her not only a deeper knowledge, but a new passion in life. She set up training and product company Tri-dosha on her return. 'I suppose what I'm trying to do is give the teachings of Ayurveda meaning in the now,' she explains. 'My goal is to assist people in spending more time in love with their life and less time struggling with the hurdles that get in the way.'



Sunita Passi's wellness rules

1 Work with your dosha. Your dosha, or constitution, will determine your mind and body type. 'Yours could be predominantly vata (fast-moving), kapha (reliable) or pitta (fiery), and the aim is to bring all three into better balance,' explains Passi. Visit her website for more information, or read *Teach Yourself Ayurveda* by Sarah Lie (Teach Yourself Books, £9.99).

2 Cook kichadi. 'This dish reigns supreme in Ayurvedic cooking,' says Passi. 'It's a simple rice and mung-bean stew that you can use to rebalance your diet after a blow-out.' Simmer the rice and beans for 10-15 minutes, then add the herbs or spices that balance your dosha: ginger for vata types, chilli for kapha, and fennel or dill for pitta.

3 Practise so-hum. 'Beginning my day with breathing exercises starts me off in a really positive frame of mind,' says Passi. Inhale deeply three times, then start repeating the phrase 'so-hum' as you inhale, first in your head, then out loud. Keep this up for as long as you can, for

up to 20 minutes, and you'll enter a really deep state of relaxation.

4 Get your prana moving. 'Blockages in your prana, or energy, stop you achieving what you want in life,' says Passi. She recommends this simple move to regulate things. Sit upright, exhale and drop your head forward, chin toward chest. Slowly roll your right ear over your right shoulder, hold for a few breaths, then swap sides. Repeat once more. ➔

THREE THINGS SHE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

● **Pukka Herbs Aloe Vera juice, £19.95 for 1 litre, from pukkaherbs.com** ✉.

'I drink it every morning. It's soothing and anti-inflammatory.'

● **The Seven Spiritual Laws Of Success: A Pocketbook Guide To The Fulfilment Of Your Dreams, by Deepak Chopra (Amber Allen, £12.99).** 'I find it so inspirational.'

● **The Sacred Chants Of Shiva by Craig Pruess, £12.95, from heaven-on-earth-music.co.uk** ✉.

'This CD of devotional music is great for creating a sense of inner peace.'



FROM LEFT: Dale Pinnock, Dr Frances Prenna Jones, Nadia Narain, Sunita Passi

THE YOGA MENTOR

Yoga teacher Nadia Narain (nadianarain.com) won't name her celebrity clients, but Kate Moss, Sadie Frost, Gwyneth Paltrow and Sam Taylor-Wood are all rumoured to have trained with her. You can see why, when she says, 'I don't care if you can do the splits or a back bend in my class, but I do hope that whoever trains with me leaves feeling good about themselves.' Known for both her work with mums-to-be and her toning classes at London's Triyoga centre, this year also saw Narain create a mood-boosting candle range. Next year will see the launch of her treatment oils, and, she hopes, a long-awaited book and DVD.

'I try not to think that much about the future – I take everything one day at a time,' says Narain. 'When I started doing yoga, I certainly didn't think it would still be my job 14 years later, but I believe that, as long as you love what you do, you'll find others who love it, too. I guess that's what people like about me – I'm passionate about what I do and care about those I help do it.'



Nadia Narain's wellness rules

1 Build a savasana into your day.

The corpse pose is the position of total relaxation in yoga, which sees you lying on your back, arms and legs spread. 'At this time of year, particularly, I always extend the time people spend in this position at the end of class – adequate rest supports the immune system,' says Narain. At least once a day, head somewhere quiet, lie down and just "corpse".

2 Forget trying to be perfect. 'Now I've realised you don't have to do everything perfectly, I've got a far more relaxed approach to life,' she says.

3 Protect yourself in winter. 'I hate the cold and always try to have my longest holiday in the winter,' says Narain. 'But if I'm in Britain, I'm diligent about my yoga, as it helps boost circulation. I wear sheepskin insoles in my shoes [find them at Boots], as I feel much better if my feet are warm. I'm also a huge fan of Sambucol – it's a really good immunity builder.' Sambucol Immuno Forte, £9.71, from victoriahealth.com.

4 Use your breath. 'If you pay attention to your breath, it can change you from the inside out,' says Narain. Calm yourself in a stressful situation by practising alternate nostril breathing. Close one nostril with your finger, inhale through the other for a count of four, hold for four, then release nostril one, blocking the other side, instead, and exhale for eight counts. Repeat five times, then switch to the other side. ☛

THREE THINGS SHE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

- glowgetter.co.uk ☛. 'I hate shopping, so I buy all my presents on this wellbeing website. And the good thing is, I'm buying people something that means they can invest time or care in themselves.'
- **Synergy Organic Super Greens, £14.95**, from xynergy.co.uk ☛. 'I don't always have time to eat all the vegetables I want, but this gives me a healthy shot of greens. I mix the powder into apple juice.'
- **Viridian Ultimate Beauty Oil, £8.95**, from victoriahealth.com ☛. 'My skin gets seriously dry in winter, but this moisturises it really well.'

THE FOOD HEALER

Known as the Medicinal Cook, Dale Pinnock

is famed for his encyclopaedic knowledge of which herbs, foods or supplements will get you out of any health fix. 'I believe that, whatever your health issue, changing what you eat should be part of your treatment,' he says. 'I don't just focus on the vitamins and minerals in food – there are thousands of other pharmacologically active compounds in foods that have a therapeutic effect.'

Pinnock cured himself of acne in his teens with a diet overhaul and, since then, as a nutritionist and herbalist with clinics in London and Cambridgeshire, he has treated clients suffering everything from skin conditions to chronic fatigue (dalepinnock.com). His first book, *Medicinal Cookery: How You Can Benefit From Nature's Edible Pharmacy* (Constable and Robinson, £6.99), is published next April.



Dale Pinnock's wellness rules

1 Boost your immune system.

'The most potent immune supplement I've come across wasn't echinacea, but extract of maitake mushroom,' says Pinnock. 'It's dynamite. It tricks your body into thinking it's under attack from a bug, which then stimulates a massive immune surge.' Take it every day in winter. Try Viridian Mushroom Antioxidant Complex, £33.50, from nutricentre.com ✉.

2 Cut out refined carbohydrates.

In the long term, they will damage your health. 'If you eat too many foods made from sugar or white flour, it causes a reaction called glycation that leads to a stiffening of the artery walls which, in turn, raises blood pressure.'

3 Eat seasonally. When food is at its nutritional peak, it stands to reason that it's better for you.

Right now, parsnips should be on your menu. 'Excess sugar consumption can wreak havoc with your levels of gut flora, but parsnips are a powerful

prebiotic that feed good bacteria.' Taking a probiotic supplement for two weeks will also help. Try Viridian Tri-Blend Acidophilus Complex with FOS, £7.36, from goodnessdirect.co.uk ✉.

4 Take a B-complex supplement.

'Vitamin B helps your body create more energy and stay calm,' says Pinnock. 'As an added bonus, it gives skin a real glow.' Try Solgar Formula B-100, £10.72, from solgar.co.uk ✉.

THREE THINGS HE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

- **Nature's Answer Siberian Ginseng, £12.49, from nutricentre.com ✉.**

'I take it whenever I'm stressed – it helps your body adapt to pressure.'

- **Celery.** 'It contains a really potent painkiller. The best way to get the benefits is to juice it.'

- **Houmous.** 'It's a perfect food, packed with essential fats, protein, zinc and selenium. I'm addicted to it!'

THE SKIN PERFECTOR

Dr Frances Prenna Jones is one of London's most sought-after skin specialists. With a client list that includes everyone from judges to yummy mummies, a waiting list of six months and celebrity fans who include Louise Redknapp, everyone who's been treated by her raves about her approach.

'I really focus on improving the quality of the skin,' she says. 'The way I look at it, if your canvas isn't great, using treatments like Botox is pointless.'

To ensure that no one, including her, feels on a skincare conveyer belt, Dr Prenna Jones limits the number of patients she sees each day. The same 'do it brilliantly or don't bother' attitude extends to her product line: for the past four years, it has consisted of just one signature item, Formula 2006 (£93, drfrancesprennajones.com ✉). Next year, she's adding two more products, and moving to a larger clinic in Mayfair.



Dr Frances Prenna Jones' wellness rules

1 Have an expert assess your skin type.

'Women often misdiagnose their skin and so use products that hurt, rather than help,' she says. 'For example, a lot of us compensate for dry skin by using a rich moisturiser. But if it's too heavy, it'll block the pores, which can lead to an outbreak of spots.'

2 Treat spots or rosacea with Cold-Eeze capsules.

'They contain zinc gluconate, which is a really potent anti-inflammatory mineral,' says Prenna Jones. 'I find 30mg a day can help my acne or rosacea patients no end. And it works for colds, too, of course.' Find it at amazon.co.uk ✉, £8.40.

3 Seasonalise your skincare.

'Winter is the perfect time to use retinols, such as those in the RoC Retinol Correxion range, as they make the skin slightly sun sensitive,' she says. Save IPL light treatments, sclerotherapy [vein treatment] and peels for winter, too.

4 Use Formula 2006.

'It might be cheeky to recommend my own product, but this is great for busy women,' says Dr Prenna Jones. 'I put everything in it I thought would benefit skin. You just put some on a cotton pad and sweep it over the skin and it cleanses, moisturises, increases cell turnover and fights free-radical damage.' ■

THREE THINGS SHE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

- **Lancôme Flash Bronzer Gel, £21.50.** 'It's natural-looking and doesn't clog pores, so it's fine to use even if you have acne.'

- **Bassetts Soft And Chewy Vitamin C With Zinc, £3.49.** 'I recommend all my patients take vitamin C for their skin.'

- **Diptyque candle in Fenouil Sauvage, from £20 at spacenk.co.uk ✉.** 'I take one when I travel – it creates a home from home wherever I go.'