

# Natural Lifestyle

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February 2021



## The male manual

Supporting men's health, in mind and body

## Herbs for health

The heroes from the plant world keeping us healthy



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# Welcome



There's no escaping that 2020 was a year of trials and tribulations, of challenges, of uncertainty and of some of the toughest times people have faced. And as we move into the second month of 2021, some of this uncertainty remains – at the time of writing, the country has moved into a third national lockdown as a new Covid variant rages and cases continue to rise, and rise fast. But we must not forget we now have three vaccines approved and we also know more about this virus and how to combat it.

But while the virus itself poses threat to our immediate health, we must also be aware of the long-term effect of the pandemic; isolation and loneliness, poverty, depression and anxiety, and growing waistlines are all impacts that will be felt for some time to come. And if we look in more detail at the mental health aspect, men, it seems, are not faring so well. The mental health charity, Mind, has revealed in new research into male mental health that, while some progress has been made, men feel worried or low more regularly than 10 years ago and are consequently twice as likely to feel suicidal. While it found that men generally feel more able to seek help and open up about their mental health than a decade ago, those with current worries are still relying on coping mechanisms such as drinking alcohol alone (13 per cent versus nine per cent).

And so, men's health takes the focus of this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, where Esther Mills-Roberts casts her eye over the current health concerns of the male population and offers a holistic health plan for men. You can read more on page 16.

Also in this issue, we look to the plant world to help support our health and wellbeing with expert advice on the best herbs for you. As well as that, we have advice on why you need vitamin K, some tasty gluten-free recipes and a great selection of giveaways.

As each month goes on, we hope that the world as we know it becomes a healthier and happier place, one in which we can live free of restrictions, where we can see friends and family, and where our health isn't at risk. In the meantime, we hope our readers remain in good health and keep an eye on our website, [www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk](http://www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk) and our Instagram (@naturallifestylemag) for all the latest in the natural health world.

*Rachel Symonds,*  
Editor

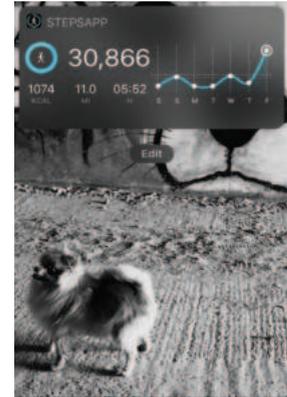
## THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS

Each issue, I will be detailing a favourite product I have come across this month, whether it's a supplement that helps support your health, a beauty product for some natural indulgence, or some great tasting and healthy food. The importance of keeping our immune systems strong has been reinforced in recent weeks and for this reason, why not try this new range from ProVen Probiotics: Urgent-C comprises three products that make delicious drinks containing 1000mg of vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, probiotics and other immunity nutrients, including selenium, elderberry extract and beta 1.3 and 1.6 glucans.



## THE BEST BITS

An insight into what the *Natural Lifestyle* team have been up to this month.



He may have little legs but they are mighty legs from René, *Natural Lifestyle's* mascot, who clocked up the steps with his owner, our Designer, Clare.



Smiling and warming up at the end of a brisk and muddy run for Editor, Rachel.



It was a day of den building for our Sales Director, Ruth, and her twin daughters, Grace and Amelia.

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[www.mynaturallifestyle.com](http://www.mynaturallifestyle.com)

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# Contents

## REGULARS

**6** **INSIDE... Health**

**8** **INSIDE... Lifestyle**

**10** **INSIDE... Beauty**

**12** **Explore in store**

How Fairtrade supports communities around the world

**15** **Explore in store**

Learn about vitamin K and why we need it for health

**20** **Ask the experts**

Your questions answered

**30** **The lowdown**

A focus on looking after the heart

**31** **NL giveaways**

**32** **Recipes**

Your guide to tasty gluten-free cuisine

## FEATURES

**16** **Men's health**

Esther Mills-Roberts offers the essential advice for male health, physically and mentally

**24** **Herbal health**

We explore the plant world and offer advice on the best herbs for health and wellbeing

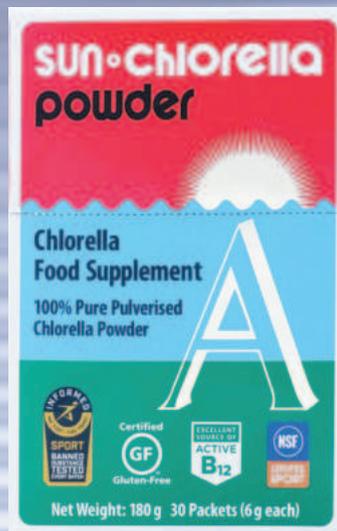
**28** **Award winners**

We are excited to reveal the winners of the *Natural Lifestyle* Product Awards



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## CHAMPIONING HEALTHY HABITS IN THE YOUNG

With cases of obesity at an all time high, and the Covid-19 pandemic affecting what we eat, a new campaign has launched to help improve children's health.

Junior Cooks Club is a collaboration between pioneering

not-for profit, Cook School, and World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF), the UK's only charity solely dedicated to cancer prevention and survival.

Through fun, hands-on classes, Junior Cooks Club aims to provide school-age children with cooking skills, as well as vital life lessons on diet and nutrition.

Amanda Grant, Cook School Co-founder and award-winning food writer and cookbook author, explained: "The benefits of getting children into the kitchen are huge – it goes way beyond them giving a hand with the washing up! It's a life skill. We all have to eat every day, and if you learn how to cook, you're much more likely to have a healthy and enjoyable life ahead of you. It's so important to eat healthily, but it needs to be easy, accessible and affordable too, otherwise, those lessons can easily fall by the wayside."

The campaign has never been more important, with less than one in five children currently eating their recommended five a day, and child obesity rising every year, which can lead to long-term health issues.

Sidonie Sakula-Barry, WCRF's Health Promotion Manager, commented: "Currently, an average of six UK children in a classroom of 30 are overweight or obese when they start primary school. Families are facing a rising tide of cheap, easily available, unhealthy food; reinforced in children's minds through TV ads and online content. It has never been more vital to take action to improve children's health and wellbeing. By doing so, we can reduce the risk of children developing cancer and other diseases in adulthood"

# Inside... HEALTH

## Lessons in veganism

If you are feeling motivated to try plant-based eating, or are already vegan but want some fresh inspiration, *Bo's Book* could be for you.

The cookbook has been created by The Vegan Chef School, with illustrations from animal welfare charity, *Miracle's Mission*, and written by vegan chef, Day Radley and her talented team of student chefs.



Featuring simple, easy-to-follow recipes accompanied by mouth-watering photos, they are suitable for everyone as all are gluten-free and mainly healthy. There are practical suggestions for savoury snacks, easy dinners, weekenders (recipes that take a bit longer to make but are well worth the effort) and indulgent sweet treats.

Many of the pages include illustrations of some of the vulnerable dogs that *Miracle's Mission* has helped, together with their own captivating stories. All the profits from the book will go to help dogs and cats at *Miracle's Mission* and help fund its appeal to build the UK's first disabled animal rehabilitation centre.

## We love

**BEN & ANNA SHAMPOO TABLETS** – Cut down on single use plastic with these innovative shampoo tablets. In plastic-free packaging and bursting with natural ingredients, such as baking soda, olive oil and plant extracts, these tablets gently wash away dirt and impurities without stripping away moisture from the hair, leaving your hair naturally beautiful. Certified natural by NaTrue and registered with the Vegan Society.

**STRATH** – Keep your health on track this year with the help of this Swiss herbal supplement, which has been around for more than 60 years. Its remarkable effects have been demonstrated in numerous clinical studies, which show it can boost absorption of nutrients in the digestive system, increasing those which play a crucial role in immunity, energy release and cognitive function.

## Offering a helping hand

A British Army veteran is encouraging the nation to join him in a new challenge to support homeless people.

John Watson Allison has launched the Under a Tarp global challenge, which will raise funds for a homeless charity of that person's choice. All you need to do is build your own tarpaulin shelter outdoors, spend the night in the homemade structure and sleep on a cardboard bed. Participants can nominate others to take part via social media channels and share their experience of the challenge via Under a Tarp too.

It is hoped that the challenge will help to raise awareness of the homelessness problem and the invaluable work of countless homeless charities throughout the UK and beyond. But it is also designed to help people learn new life skills, such as shelter building, and become more resilient in testing times.

It is a cause close to John's heart; he served with the British Army for 24 years, specialising in bomb disposal and counter terrorist search, and found the transition into civilian life particularly challenging. He had to move home 12 times since leaving the Army, often because landlords were selling up, converting rooms into AirBnB rentals or no longer wanted to rent out their property. In 2017, he was made redundant and a month later, was told that he would have to leave the house where he'd been renting a room for a year. He lived in his tiny van for six months, with no fixed abode and was technically homeless.

For the past 10 years, John has run urban adventure StreetGym, using nothing but the fabric of the city to keep people fit and he often encountered the



homelessness problem during the course of his work.

"It doesn't matter who you are or where you've come from, homelessness can happen to any one of us," John commented.

And speaking of the challenge, John added: "We often talk about helping the homeless, but this is a truly immersive experience, moving beyond comfort zones and towards a deeper understanding of what it's really like to be sleeping rough on the streets.

"For many people, their resilience has never been tested as much as it is now. There has never been a more important time to learn basic skills and the art of self-sufficiency. We also need to learn to accept and be grateful for what we have too, with so many people less fortunate than ourselves."

Find out more at [www.underatarp.co.uk](http://www.underatarp.co.uk)



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## CLEAN HANDS ON THE GO

Never before has hand sanitiser been so in demand as in recent months, but its use comes with worries about excess plastic.

And here to help us cut back on use of plastics is Sanikind, a refillable sanitiser mist made from recycled ocean-bound plastic.

The Sanikind Mini refill holds 16 ounces of hand sanitiser and offers 460 sprays – and perfect for on the go, the stylish personal spray bottle clips on to a key ring, so it is always with you.



## THE SHAPE OF FITNESS IN 2021

Virtual exercise classes became a thing of 2020 thanks to the Covid-19 lockdown, but what can we expect to see in demand when it comes to fitness this year?

According to Steven Virtue, Fitness Development Manager at Total Fitness, Brits are looking for new ways to revive their workout routines with the latest industry trends, classes and techniques – so, what does he think will be popular?

- **Remote coaching:** In the wake of Covid-19, remote coaching is set to be a big trend for the new year. It's a great way to motivate you to train both at home or in the gym, as it allows you to work one to one with your coach or personal trainer on an online platform. You can receive regular workouts which provide you with fresh fitness content to train to and the remote model allows you to post your results from each session on the platform, so your trainer can review your progress and make recommendations for the next session.

- **Wearable technology:** Although not a new trend, wearable fitness technology has been an extremely popular, staple trend, which is set to continue into 2021. Fitness tracking devices provide an in-depth look at your physical activity and the smart technology offers recommendations to improve your daily exercise routine. Wearable technology has been proven to help keep the wearer on track with their fitness goals and these pieces of tech can record data specific to the users' requirement and activity trends, which is what makes it so appealing to the wider demographic – it makes fitness more personalised and transparent.

- **Covid prescribed fitness training:** For those who have contracted Covid-19 and are looking to continue with their normal fitness routine, it's important that they reintroduce exercise slowly with a gradual build-up. There is increasingly more being understood about the long- and short-term ramifications of the virus so it's vital that those who are recovering do so safely. There has been an increase in training providers offering Covid-specific fitness courses in recent months, with the main intent of introducing members back into the training environment whilst

closely monitoring cardiac problems and long-standing lung issues.

- **Virtual fitness:** Virtual fitness training is class-based and can be completed online, in gyms on a main screen or on equipment. This type of training is on the rise as it provides a great solution for people who prefer to exercise in the comfort of their own home or on a relaxed schedule in their local health club.

- **Outdoor fitness training:** Lockdown has seen a rise in fitness bootcamps in parks and outdoor spaces around the country and is something which looks to continue, even whilst gyms are open in the new year. Bootcamps and outdoor fitness, such as running and cycling, have been keeping the nation fit and is still very much alive, as it provides people with an opportunity to mix up their fitness routine and get outside in the fresh air when they can't attend the gym.

# Inside... LIFESTYLE

## The running rules

Running rose in popularity during 2020 as people recognised its benefits at a time when many gyms were closed.

And whatever kind of runner you are, and whatever your goals, a new book is publishing to inspire everyone to take their first steps to running success.

Vassos Alexander is well-known as a sports presenter and is part of the Chris Evans Breakfast Show on VirginRadio. Also a marathon runner, Vassos has penned *How to Run A Marathon*, designed to show readers that absolutely anyone can take those first steps to defeating the distance.

Including inspiring interviews with running legends, charming tales of remarkable marathons throughout the world, crucial training and nutrition tips and so much more, Vassos shares all the lessons he's learnt – from the start line to the finish line.

A seasoned endurance runner with a sub-three hour marathon PB, he has completed some of the longest and most gruelling races on earth. He's run almost 100 marathons and ultramarathons, and in this book, shows us why we shouldn't be afraid of attempting the 26-mile stretch once.

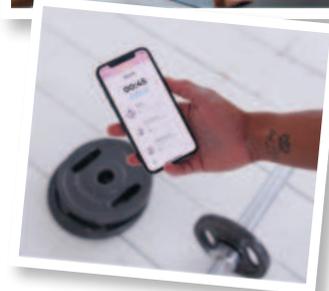
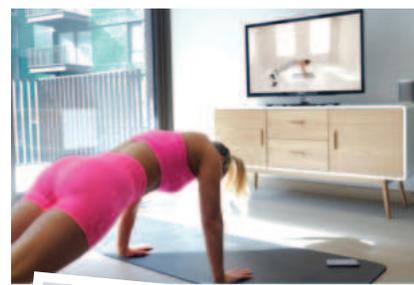
## GET SHREDDY TO TRAIN

Keep your new year fitness goals on track with the help of these new additions from SHREDDY.

The SHREDDY fitness app has now introduced the SHREDDY KIT, vegan-friendly equipment and accessories designed to support an app subscription.

The app includes high-energy home workouts, with a choice to get involved in real-time classes, alongside healthy and easy-to-follow meal plans.

The perfect way to kickstart your fitness journey, SHREDDY can be purchased for £9.99 a month on Google Play and the App Store, while the kit is available to purchase at [www.shreddy.com](http://www.shreddy.com)



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[www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk](http://www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk)

## YOUR MASK MATTERS

You can give your hair a deeply nourishing treat, while keeping an eye on your environmental load with these new creations from Faith in Nature.

Combining deeply nourishing and sensory stimulating fair trade ingredients, this new collection of hair masks has been created by the leaders in the sustainability movement to be as kind to the planet as they are to the hair and scalp.

The four masks have been formulated to be as high-performance as they are ethical; made with 99 per cent natural ingredients, formulated with organic extracts, cruelty-free, Vegan Society certified and housed in 100 per cent recycled and recyclable packaging.

Choose from Coconut & Shea, Shea & Argan, Dragonfruit, and Rose & Chamomile varieties, the masks are designed to be used from root to tip and can be applied as a three minute to 20-minute treatment.



# Inside... BEAUTY



## Nourishingly organic

Indulge your skin with this organic addition to the Nourish range.

Nourish London's new Bergamot & Cardamom Exfoliating Soap is the result of a collaboration with luxury organic London soap maker, Saboon Alee.

Each soap is carefully formulated and hand-crafted using the finest organic and sustainably sourced oils, mineral clays and plant-based dyes.

Nourishing plant-based cleansers and sweet almond shell powder gently exfoliate and cleanse the skin. Blended with skin conditioning shea butter, invigorating bergamot and warming cardamom essential oils, this luxurious vegan exfoliating soap will leave your skin feeling refreshed, smooth and beautifully fragranced.



## Perfect your pedi

Give your feet a treat with the help of these vegan goodies.

Peacci S.K.I.N's vegan and cruelty free ManiPedi products combine luxury with carefully selected ingredients, perfect for an at-home mani-pedi.

Peacci's simple step by step guide includes:

- **Step one:** Peacci smooth – the Peacci Smooth Foot File has an innovative and long-lasting micro-grain technology that quickly buffs away the hardest of skin for the smoothest polished feet around.
- **Step two:** The perfect prep – give yourself an all-natural exfoliation with the Peacci Mani-Pedi Scrub, a hypoallergenic and nourishing blend enriched with avocado oil, which supplements the lipid layer of the skin and soothes. With a 100 per cent natural exfoliation from ground coconut shell and sugar, along with peach kernel oil and castor oil to provide an exceptional non-drip exfoliation. Apply the scrub in circular motions to damp skin to naturally exfoliate and stimulate blood circulation.
- **Step three:** Velvet up – the Peacci Vanilla Mani-Pedi Mask for dry, chapped feet can be used for a speedy deep conditioning by massaging a small amount into damp skin, or, for longer intensive rejuvenation, apply generously and wrap in a moisture sock for more effective results (or pro hack – cling film!) and leave for 15-20 minutes.
- **Step four:** Silk sway – Peacci Peach Mani-Pedi Cream works as a hydrating moisturiser and intensive cuticle treatment. It has a gorgeous velvety texture that melts straight into your skin.
- **Step five:** Base coat and polish – Peacci 2 in 1 Base Coat can be used as a base coat and as a hardening treatment and prevents nail surface staining. Peacci offers a huge range of 100 per cent vegan and cruelty-free creative hues with long lasting results, that don't negatively impact the strength and health of the nail.

## THE GRASS IS GREENER

Leading the way in sustainability is Evolve Beauty with its switch to new grass paper packaging.

The certified organic, vegan, cruelty-free skincare brand, hand-blended in small batches at its eco studio in Hertfordshire, is a passionate advocate of ethical and environmentally-friendly business practices.

The brand, founded by Laura Rudoe, sources as many raw ingredients as it can locally and uses recycled packaging wherever possible. For example, the glass bottles are made from 40 per cent recycled glass, and all cartons are made from FSC recycled card, with non-toxic soy and vegetable inks for labels.

But the brand has taken it further; to reduce its environmental impact even further, it will be repackaging all of its products in 100 per cent recyclable grass paper in 2021.

Laura explained: "As part of our Positive Planet aim to reduce resource usage in our supply chain, in April, we will be changing our packaging to grass paper cartons. As well as the fact that our new grass-based packaging is made with 40 per cent natural grass fibres and the grass that is used in the paper is sourced close to its point of manufacture, the production of this kind of paper needs 97 per cent less energy and chemicals. In addition, there is a 99.9 per cent saving in water usage compared to using standard wood pulp and produces 75 per cent less CO2 emissions."



# Beauty Must Haves

1 Let your imagination run wild with our refillable makeup palettes. Perfect for mixing and matching any benecos 'it-pieces' pressed powders. Choose from 12 eyeshadows, 4 compact powders, 3 blushes, 2 highlighters, 2 bronzers and 1 contouring powder to create the perfect palette suited to you. Create natural everyday makeup or go all out with a bold look using these highly pigmented powders. Certified COSMOS Organic and suitable for vegans..

[www.benecos.uk](http://www.benecos.uk) RRP from £3.95



2 Re-energize your skin with the new Zero Waste Apricot Facial Fluid from Fair Squared. This luxurious face mask is designed to give skin that much needed boost of extra rich moisture, resulting in a hydrated, soft, smooth, and radiant complexion. Containing Fairtrade ingredients such as Apricot Kernel Oil from Pakistan and Olive Oil from Palestine. For best results soak the fluid on their new reusable organic cotton facial mask twice a week. 100% plastic free and recyclable packaging.

[www.fair-squared.co.uk](http://www.fair-squared.co.uk) RRP £9.95



3 Treat dry skin with the new FAIR SQUARED Zero Waste Shea Facial Soap. Containing olive oil and fairly traded shea butter and coconut oil to ensure skin is generously moisturised. This soap is highly nurturing and gently cleanses the skin, making it perfect for regular use on dry skin, especially in the colder months. 2 x 80g bar plus organic cotton bag.

[www.fair-squared.co.uk](http://www.fair-squared.co.uk) RRP £9.95



4 Lavera MY AGE Eye & Lip Contour Cream is a powerful anti-ageing product perfect for the most delicate facial areas. Rich in plant extracts, the innovative formula with organic hibiscus and natural ceramides minimises expression wrinkles around the eyes and giving the lip contours a firmer appearance. The luxurious smooth texture provides intensive care for your skin.

[www.laverauk.co.uk](http://www.laverauk.co.uk) RRP £24.95



5 Formulated with certified organic Aloe Vera, Chamomile and Rose, these fully biodegradable 100% organic cotton facial wipes cleanse and remove makeup from even the most sensitive skin. The 100% natural and sweet fragrance leaves skin feeling fresh and revived. Certified vegan by VEGANOK.

[www.organyc.uk](http://www.organyc.uk) RRP £5.29

# FACTS ABOUT FAIRTRADE

**We can all make a difference to the world in the way that we shop, and by making small shifts to our buying habits, such as choosing some Fairtrade items, it can add up to a lot.**

**F**airtrade is really quite simple as a concept; it is all about securing better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. These producers are making some of the most common everyday items that we buy and use – think tea and coffee, bananas and chocolate – which means it is so easy for us to contribute to making a difference.

But how does it all work? And why is it so important for us in the Western world to consider producers in other parts of the globe?

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Items that have been fairly traded means that the people who produce or grow the product have been paid a fair price for their goods. In some schemes, they will be paid a certain premium for that item, and money is reinvested in local communities, for things such as education and infrastructure projects.

If we look specifically at one of the best-known schemes in the UK, the Fairtrade Mark can be found on more than 6,000 items for sale in the UK, everything from everyday food and drink items, right through to flowers, beauty and cooking ingredients, clothing and even jewellery. And with this Fairtrade system, there are over 1.66m farmers and workers in 1,411 producer organisations.

By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices, Fairtrade tackles the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the most vulnerable. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

## SMART SHOPPING

The last year has been an unusual one when it comes to our shopping habits – who can forget that craziness of the panic buying in the early part of 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and then the struggles to get out and actually buy the items that you wanted.

But through it all, Fairtrade products have been available – and actually, the importance of them has never been more prominent. According to the Fairtrade Foundation, which runs the Fairtrade Mark, a good example is coffee; although sales have remained strong, global coffee prices are volatile due to uncertainty in the commodities markets. This puts producers in extreme uncertainty and threatens livelihoods and in several high-volume producing regions, such as Honduras and Peru, movement has been severely restricted, which will impact the harvesting, transport and milling of coffees. Or take bananas; farms are taking necessary measures for increased sanitisation, equipment, barriers between workers and providing extra transport for workers. Activities on banana farms continue, but with reduced staff to lower the risk of virus transmission.

When shopping, look for products that say they have fair trade certification, such as the Fairtrade Mark, and where you can't find it in an item that you want, ask the retailer and the likelihood is, they can order it for you – this will then drive further demand.

To find out more about Fairtrade and availability of product, visit [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

### TRY THIS

Fair Squared Shea  
Hair Soap

Nutiva O'Coconut Treat  
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Coffee

Good Earth Ginger,  
Turmeric & Lemon Teabags

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Immune & Energy Intensive – Daytime Kickstart is designed to be taken in the morning and contains 25 billion Lab4 probiotics researched- backed friendly bacteria with nutrients to support immunity and energy. 1000mg vitamin C per sachet and vitamin D, zinc and selenium to support immunity and elderberry extract and beta 1,3 & 1,6 glucans.

Also contains B vitamins and caffeine to support energy levels, with coQ10 and guarana extract. One-a-day powder sachets -mix with water to make a delicious orange flavoured effervescent drink or take directly into the mouth.

Immune Intensive Night-time Support is a hot honey, lemon and blackcurrant drink for the evening, containing immune support with prebiotics and magnesium.

Powder sachets designed to be taken in the evening as a hot soothing lemon, honey and blackcurrant drink. 1000mg vitamin C per sachet with vitamin D and zinc to support immunity bee propolis, beta glucans and elderberry extract & inulin.

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# Keep up with vitamin **K**

**Vitamin K perhaps gets less of the spotlight over more well-known nutrients, but it doesn't make it any less important for our health and wellbeing.**

**T**he last few months has seen huge focus placed on key nutrients that are needed to get us through the winter months, with nutrition experts, rightly so, encouraging us to ensure we're getting enough vitamin D, so crucial for good health.

And while we know that this nutrient, along with many other vitamins, are imperative for our wellbeing and should be supplemented with, there is another that is less well-known – yet the research is increasingly showing us just how important it is.

Vitamin K is a key nutrient for many areas of our health, most notably with regard to the heart and to our bone health. It is also important to help make other nutrients work, as we explain here.

## The vitamin explained

Vitamin K is considered a fat-soluble vitamin, which means that it is similar to oil in that it does not dissolve in water and is better absorbed when you consume with fat. Other fat-soluble vitamins include D, A and E.

The K stands for the German word for coagulation, 'koagulation' (related to its role in blood-clotting) and it is considered important for our health for a range of reasons, starting with the heart; it is thought that vitamin K can help reduce the risk of calcification of blood vessels, which, if occurs, can lead to heart disease. Furthermore, it is well-regarded for its importance in supporting bone density and so becomes important the older people get and become at greater risk of osteoporosis.

It is also considered crucial for helping with blood clotting, helping wounds to heal, and we also know that vitamin K is supportive of cognitive health. There have also been suggestions recently that people can experience worse Covid-19 outcomes if they are low in vitamin K, but more research is needed in this emerging area to know if this is the case.

## A word on intake

It's important to distinguish between the two types – vitamin K1 and K2. Vitamin K1 comes from plant sources, while vitamin K2, often referred to as menaquinone, occurs in some animal-based and fermented foods, such as natto.

It is the latter source that is often recommended for supplement form as it is thought it can be absorbed better.

Bear in mind, however, that some vitamin K1 you get from food can be converted into vitamin K2 in the body. You should try to consume vitamin K-rich foods regularly to avoid deficiency, and if you think you need a supplement, start with your local health food store, as they can recommend the best for you, and can also usually suggest a reputable Nutritional Therapist if you need further advice.

## Getting enough

We know that many people are lacking in important nutrients simply because they are not consuming enough of the foods that contain them.

In the case of vitamin K, it can be found in green leafy veg, so ideally increase your intake of kale, broccoli and spinach, in cereal grains, in vegetable oils and you may also be able to obtain small amounts from meat and dairy.

However, nutrition experts will often recommend a supplement. The NHS recommends that adults need around 1mcg a day for each kilogram of body weight, so, for example, for someone who weights 75kg, they would need 75mcg a day. If you aren't sure, or you feel you may have a greater need for it, we would always recommend seeking the advice of a Nutritional Therapist, who can assess your needs based on lifestyle and concerns.

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# Hey man

**Times are changing for men's health, with ever more focus placed on wellbeing. With things shifting in 2020, men should move into 2021 with renewed determination to get happier and healthier. Here's how, by Esther Mills-Roberts.**

**E**veryone knows that men and women are different, not just in physicality, but mentally and emotionally too. The most recent data (September 2020) tells us that life expectancy for men in the UK is now 79.4 years. Men are more likely to carry extra weight (67 per cent of men being classed as overweight or obese) and are three times more likely than women to reach for alcohol to a point where they become dependent. Over recent years, we've seen campaigns that have brought men's mental health to the forefront, and for good reason, as one in eight report mental health problems. Of course, we can't ignore Covid-19 either, and, according to the Men's Health Forum (November 2020), men make up nearly 62 per cent of Covid deaths in people under 85.

To encourage every man towards better health and wellness, we're here to help – and the good news is there are plenty of natural health products and therapies to support you along the way.

## Head strong

Mental health encompasses so many things; our environment, exposure to stress, confidence, support levels, ability to relax, sleep, and activity levels. This is where a holistic, all-round approach really comes into its own, thinking of mind, body and spirit together and a natural health practitioner can help you with this.

As well as calming herbs such as chamomile and passiflora, recommendations can include essential oils such as patchouli and sandalwood. The herb, St John's wort, is also beneficial for those with low mood, but do tell your GP if you are taking any medication. And vitamin D is absolutely crucial for the mind (as well as the immune system, among much more) so as well as getting outside regularly, taking a supplement is advised.

Think about what you eat as we need to fuel the mind correctly; we know from research that men who feel under pressure or emotionally down don't cook and prepare foods, as motivation and interest drops. As a result, intakes of B vitamins and vitamin C can drop, which can influence energy levels and immune function (as well as fibre consumption, which is important for digestive health). And let's not forget that junk food and excess sugar is no good for the brain, so try not to overdo the bad food.

Give yourself some simple goals; three different vegetables a day, two different fruits, a varied diet and plenty of water. A different type of protein every day is a good idea, such as meat, beans and pulses, eggs, and soya. Add in some whole foods in the form of nuts and seeds, and quinoa. If you're succeeding with small changes, tackle some bigger ones; go low caffeine, or caffeine free – there are plenty of alternatives in your local health store, such as hot drinks based on chicory or barley, or hundreds of different teas.

If you have any concerns around your mental health, it's important you speak to your GP for a proper assessment and to be offered the right support.

*Try this*

- ★ A.Vogel Prostasan
- ★ Strath Original
- ★ Good Health Naturally Prostate Plus+
- ★ Lavera Men Sensitive Organic Moisturising Cream
- ★ The Good Guru Men's Organic MultiVitamin

## TACKLING ALCOHOL

A good drink or two is engrained in our culture, but when it becomes three, four or five, you need to be taking steps to stop the alcohol excess.

Liver health is essential for clearance of alcohol and its biochemical by-products from the body, so this is the focus of many natural health approaches. Nutrients and herbs for liver health might include milk thistle or kudzu, or antioxidants such as resveratrol or vitamins A, C and E, and amino acids, such as L-arginine.

When cutting back, why not choose low alcohol beer, and ideally, go organic. Replace half with high quality cordials and juices (at home, at least, if you're not comfortable doing this socially). Switch to organic soft drinks, and plenty of fresh water, and shift your usual alcohol spend to something else; better quality food, health-supporting supplements or something to help you sleep, perhaps.



## HEART, KEEP IT HEALTHY

Without a doubt, heart health is important for men to consider; British Heart Foundation statistics from 2020 shows that 3.9m men in the UK are living with heart disease.

Like mental health, heart health is influenced by many factors. As well as maintaining a healthy weight, there are some steps that you can take:

- **Increase activity:** As well as helping with weight management, exercise is known to improve heart health (under supervision, if you have an existing heart condition). Exercise more, with proper hydration and nutritional intakes of antioxidants and electrolytes, or possibly formulations to help with joint or muscle health. This will help to support a long-term training programme.
- **Smoking:** Seek out a smoking cessation programme or visit a natural health practitioner who can support you with complementary and alternative therapies, as well as nutritional input.
- **Supplementary support:** Popular supplements linked with heart health include garlic, which has been shown to help manage blood fat levels, beta-sitosterol for healthy cholesterol levels, supplements of essential fatty acids, such as omega 3, and omega 9, which help to maintain a healthy balance of fats in the blood.
- **Antioxidants:** Once we concentrated on vitamins A, C and E, but these days, we know that phytonutrient-rich ingredients might also help to support heart health such as resveratrol and pycnogenol. Research has also linked heart health with coenzyme Q10 and soya isoflavones, and capillary-strengthening carotenoids.

## GUTSY MEN

Your gut microbiome plays a pivotal role in your health, helping to keep your gut 'regular' (constipation can leave you feeling sluggish and weighty), helping to support your immune system and allowing the body to digest and use food efficiently, which helps every part of the body.

To help maintain a healthy digestive system, supplement with live bacterial cultures including the *Lactobacillus* bacterial family, and *Bifidobacteria*. Consider digestive enzymes to help you break down your food and keep a food diary if you suspect that you have allergies or intolerances.

## Sexual health

One area of health that is less discussed is sexual health, not just in older age, when prostate enlargement is seen more often. Stress, worry and depression are just some reasons why men might experience sexual health considerations such as lack of libido or erectile dysfunction. This can be affected by some health conditions too, such as diabetes. It's thought that about one in three men suffer from premature ejaculation.

To help maintain sexual and reproductive health, you might like to consider the following:

- **Nutrients for sperm health:** Vitamin E and B vitamins.
- **Nutrients found in large quantities in seminal fluid:** Zinc, amino acids, potassium, and vitamin C.
- **Herbs associated with reproductive health:** Saw palmetto (to help support prostate health), and ginseng (which helps the body to adapt to physical and psychological stress in the body).

There are plenty of products that can help with stress management too, such as calming and soothing herbs, essential oils for healthy nerves, as well as self-help books and music.

## WEIGHTY ISSUE

Without doubt, many men would benefit from losing some weight. But it seems from research that it might be much harder for men than women, with many weight management programmes being geared up for women, and men being left feeling like they're still struggling on their own. Health stores can offer some help by working with a local nutritionist in providing foods and supplements that help you maintain a healthy weight.

Eat wholefoods to fill you up and help your digestive health, consider weight management supplements which can help you to feel fuller for longer, bind to fat, or manage your appetite. You might also consider a regular detox programme, or even discover that weight gain is linked to a food allergy or intolerance, in which case, there are hundreds of free from foods to choose from to help you feel that your diet is rich in colour, flavour and texture.

Conjugated linoleic acid is popular, as it can help to maintain a favourable ratio of fat to lean in the body, which is especially useful if you're also exercising to help you maintain your weight. Yo-yo dieting might increase the levels of fat to lean in the body, and CLA has been found to do the opposite, helping to maintain good body composition over time, with healthy eating and activity regimes.

# NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



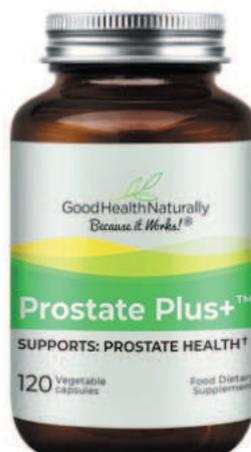
## SYNAPTAID

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SYNAPTAID contains a blend of 8

botanicals and nutrients, each of which has a role to play in supporting and assisting memory, concentration and mood. Just one of SYNAPTAID's active ingredients is Lion's Mane. This medicinal mushroom has several supporting actions in the brain, including boosting 'nerve growth factors' that can stimulate regeneration of brain cells. Lion's Mane has been found to significantly improve brain function in individuals suffering from 'cognitive impairment' in just a few weeks.

[www.wfbm.co.uk](http://www.wfbm.co.uk)



## Prostate Plus+™

Prostate Plus+™ from Good Health Naturally includes 22 carefully selected vitamins, minerals, amino acids and herbs targeted towards men's health. This unique product includes vitamins A, B2, B6, D and E, plus zinc and selenium, working alongside Saw Palmetto, Nettle Root Extract, Uva Ursi and Pomegranate Powder Extract and much more. With key ingredients to support men's prostate and urinary tract health, there is no better formula to include as part of your daily wellness

routine. Can be used for maintenance or at an elevated dose for more immediate prostate or urinary problems. Suitable for vegetarians.

[www.goodhealthnaturally.com](http://www.goodhealthnaturally.com)

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# Ask the experts

## FEEDING THE BRAIN...

by Jenny Logan

### What impact could our gut health have on mental wellbeing?

We know people experience emotion in their gut – who has not experienced butterflies in the stomach, or based a decision on a gut feeling? What many people do not realise, however, is that we do in fact have a 'second brain' in the gut. There are endocrine (brain) cells throughout the digestive tract and they are in direct communication with the brain. This communication is not one way either – the gut influences our brain, and the brain responds.

- 95 per cent of our serotonin (one of our 'happy' hormones) is produced in the gut and then sent to the brain.
  - Dopamine (responsible for motivation) production is largely reliant on our gut flora.
  - GABA (reduces anxiety) is also synthesised by our good bacteria.
- 2020 was a tough year for many. This could have impacted both gut and mental health.

### Can you recommend the best way, in terms of good bacteria and nutrients, to keep the gut/brain healthy?

The bacteria of the microbiome are involved in the production of serotonin, dopamine, and GABA. Low levels of the correct bacteria could, therefore, contribute to low mood and anxiety. Many different strains of good bacteria have been studied for their potential benefit on mental health, however, the strains with the most robust research behind them in this field are *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidum*. One study provided these bacteria or a dummy pill to people suffering with anxiety and depression over eight weeks and found that those taking the probiotic supplement reported significant benefits to mental wellbeing. Other supplements which can be helpful include magnesium and B vitamins. Magnesium deficiency has been suggested as a cause of anxiety, with supplemental magnesium reported to improve mood in as little as seven days. B vitamins support the nervous system and energy production, whilst vitamin B5 is involved in healthy mental performance and the production of important neurotransmitters, including serotonin. Combining these nutrients with the good bacteria mentioned could provide the perfect support system for the gut and brain.

**Q** Is there any way to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and what are the most important nutrients to protect my bones?

**Dr Marilyn Glenville advised:** Osteoporosis means 'porous bones', where bone density is reduced and there is an increased risk of fracture. Your diet is the most important thing to consider in terms of prevention and treatment. One of calcium's roles in the body is to act as a neutraliser. When you eat too much acidic food, your body calls up calcium reserves from the bones to counteract the acidity. One of the most highly acid-forming substances, which cause most calcium to be leached from the bones, is animal protein, particularly in red meat but

also hard cheeses. Vegetable protein is fine in the form of nuts, seeds, beans and quinoa. The best way to make your diet more alkaline is simply to aim to have more alkaline forming (fruit and vegetables) each day than acid (animal protein) and choose good quality animal protein like fish or eggs. You also need to watch what you drink as caffeine and alcohol causes the loss of calcium and soft fizzy drinks will also cause a leaching effect of calcium from your bones. You also need to add in certain vitamins and minerals to make sure that you are 'feeding' your bones. The first nutrient that comes to mind is calcium, but many other nutrients are equally crucial for healthy bones, including magnesium, vitamin D3, vitamin C and boron. And the other important point is to remember to exercise, it is 'use it or lose it' with your bone health.

## About the experts



JENNY LOGAN is the Product Development and Training Manager for Natures Aid and has worked in the natural products industry for more than 20 years. She is a Nutritional Therapist and ran her own very successful health food store for 13 years, before setting up in private practice.



GITTE DALBERG-LARSEN is the co-founder and co-owner of the Danish menstrual cup company, OrganiCup. On top of managing OrganiCup with co-founder, William Ravn, she is Commercial Director and responsible for all commercial activities of OrganiCup.



DR MARILYN GLENVILLE PhD is one of the UK's leading nutritionists. She is the author of 16 internationally bestselling books. Dr Glenville runs clinics in Harley Street, London, Kent and Ireland by phone and Skype.



ISABELLE NUNN is Head Nutritionist at Kinetic Enterprises, a company which distributes a number of brands, including Nature's Answer.



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# Silicea

# Ask the experts

## A PERIOD OF CHANGE...

by **Gitte Darlberg-Larsen**

### What are the drawbacks to using conventional period products?

One of the biggest drawbacks with conventional period products is that they are designed for one-time use only so there is no sustainability or convenience. The UK alone produces around 200,000 tonnes of menstrual related waste, which ends up in our seas and oceans so there is a big negative environmental impact with these products. Many conventional period products also contain bleach and toxins etc., which can be harmful to the body.

### What are the alternatives and why are they more convenient to use?

Sustainable alternatives could be menstrual cups, period underwear and reusable pads that are now readily available, becoming more and more popular and are much friendlier to the body as there are no chemicals, and to the planet as they are reusable. A menstrual cup is made from medical-grade silicone, which is very hygienic and can be worn for up to 12 hours and once in position, cannot be felt. A cup can be worn when participating in all sports and swimming with comfort and safety. That gives you a lot more freedom than using a pad or tampon that needs changing every three to four hours.

### What should we look for when choosing such alternatives in terms of quality?

It is important to check that the products have certifications for safety of your health and the material and ingredients are well-documented and tested, and if any dyes have been added for appearances sake that may contain harmful chemicals. I would also go for a brand that has a focus on sustainability in their packaging.



### How can mullein support my health and what is the best way to take it?

**Isabelle Nunn explained:** Mullein has been used by cultures across the world for centuries as a respiratory remedy for conditions such as hay fever, asthma, irritable chronic bronchitis, as well as other upper respiratory tract infections. Mullein is revered for its soothing and relaxing properties, making it ideal to keep in your remedy cabinet for the autumn/winter season. When experiencing chestiness and/or inflammation of the mucus membranes, mullein is an ideal tonic to aid in the reduction of inflammation, whilst also helping to stimulate fluid production and promoting expectoration, in other words, it helps you to get rid of any bothersome phlegm. Research has looked into mullein possessing anti-viral, anti-influenza, antibacterial and antioxidant activities, and studies suggest that it may support and relieve treatments of many conditions, including pneumonia, staph infections, and *E. coli*. It may also act as an antispasmodic (reduce muscle spasms), ease sore throats and migraines, and help support inner ear inflammatory disease or ear infections. The leaves of the mullein plant are naturally rich in an abundance of plant compounds, including flavonoids, saponins, tannins, mucilage, coumarins and glycosides. It also is a source of ascorbic acid (vitamin C), and several essential minerals, including potassium, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, and selenium. When looking for a supplement to take, I recommend looking for a liquid herbal extract rather than a tincture to ensure a potent dose. Consider purity also, look for a product that is alcohol-free, uses no harsh chemicals for extraction or artificial flavours or preservatives.



# “Switching to a plant-based diet changed my life”

**Adelle Adams, CNM Health Coach Graduate, explains her motivation to train with CNM.**



*Adelle Adams*

**I** was overweight, exhausted and unhappy. I knew it was a sign to reflect on what was important and how my priorities needed to change.

I was in an incredibly demanding profession as a Simulation and Training Consultant in the aerospace and defence arena, which often involved working away from home for up to weeks or even months at a time. I was making poor dietary choices and it was starting to take its toll on my health.

To some people, this lifestyle was acceptable, but for me, this wasn't the case. I started out by making small changes, like moving more and eating better. When I switched to a plant-based diet, I began to feel more energetic and like my old self. I lost over 30 pounds and even completed my first half marathon in my 40s.

I really enjoyed learning about the positive effects of good nutrition and being more active. I

had seen the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) at a number of expos over the last few years and I was interested in how I could take my knowledge further.

What attracted me to CNM was its naturopathic, 'food first' approach. Discovering that CNM had launched its Health Coach diploma with a programme that supported these principles, including anatomy and physiology, nutrition and fitness, was fantastic. I felt the course was made just for me, so I jumped at it!

All the course modules were comprehensive, and the tutors were extremely supportive and knowledgeable. The content made me curious to examine the impact of the lifestyle decisions we make every day. The practical client coaching sessions were invaluable and really brought the whole programme to life.

I'm thrilled to be practising as a Health Coach in my own business, AdamsEve Health &

Wellness, where I provide individual coaching, independent consultancy, corporate workshops and group coaching programmes. Not only is it a career which offers flexibility and work-life balance, it also enables me to help others make positive and long-lasting dietary and lifestyle changes. Gaining my Health Coach diploma has been a fantastic investment.

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# NATURE'S HEROES

**The botanical world offers much in the way of healthy, nourishing and restorative benefits – and with a little help from our experts, we suggest the best to support your wellbeing.**

**H**erbal remedies are often referred to as traditional medicine because they have been used for so many years to support health and wellness, long before the advent of pharmaceutical approaches. And while, of course, modern medicine is imperative, herbs can be a fantastic aid to this, not only keeping the body functioning generally but also helping to address some specific health concerns, whether a menopausal hot flush, an enlarged prostate or the signs of a cold.

Alison Cullen, Nutritional Practitioner and Education Manager at herbal brand, A.Vogel, explained: "First the word, then the plant, and lastly the knife" – Asclepius of Thessaly. This tenet from Ancient Greece outlines the need for a gentle approach to healing: counselling first, then using herbal remedies and good diet, and surgery only as a last resort. Whilst some medical issues deservedly bypass the initial stages and go straight to the knife for urgent attention, many are more appropriately dealt with by advice on diet, and herbal remedies.

"Herbal remedies are only one step away from foods – in many cases, they are more concentrated versions of plants that we regularly consume as part of our diet. As such, they are easily recognised and absorbed by the body, which has all the right receptor sites to enable it to pick up the constituents and make the best use of them."

Victor Perfitt MBE, a leading traditional herbal medicine expert and Qualified Person Pharmacovigilance at Bio-Health, continued: "Herbs have been my life's work and every day, I am amazed at the power of plants to heal gently and effectively for many common ailments that affect us all from time to time. The use of plants in medicine is as old as men and women have been on the earth for not only their source of food but also the base of all food chains for every living creature. Quite simply, no plants, no life."

Derek Fox, from North American Herb and Spice, went on: "Ancient civilisations across the world learned about alleviating symptoms or boosting health with plants and for thousands of years, mother nature's herbal drugstore, from seeds, leaves, barks, and even roots, was all mankind had. As knowledge grew about which plants seemed to help for particular problems, and compounds were isolated from them, so medicine as we know it today evolved. Indeed, the majority of popular modern pharmaceutical drugs are concentrated isolates from plants, but this engineering of nature comes with a multitude of side effects often requiring further medical intervention."

Sujata Luthra, Administrator at The Good Guru, also pointed out: "The true power of herbs lies in their wealth of protective polyphenols – plant compounds with potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. Polyphenols are anti-microbial, so they can help protect us from harmful bacteria as well."

## THE IMMUNE BOOSTER

One of our favourite herbs is echinacea thanks to its cold-busting, immune supportive properties – perfect during cold and flu season.

"At this time of year, guarding our immune function with *Echinacea purpurea* makes perfect sense. The joy of a herbal remedy is that it rarely has one sole mode of action – usually, it has multiple ways of achieving its goal. Plants such as echinacea have been defending themselves from viral and bacterial infections for centuries, and they are pretty smart in how they achieve this. When taking this herb, we can benefit from its multifaceted ways of countering infections, against which pathogens are unable to arm themselves," Alison explained. Victor continued: "Echinacea is used by millions across the world for the relief of common respiratory ailments and immune support. People are turning away from Paracetamol and reaching for the support of echinacea." And Jenny Carson, Nutritionist and Technical Manager at Viridian Nutrition, added: "Research suggests elderberries have exerted benefits in cases of colds and influenza infections. The OPC content in elderberries are known to exhibit antibacterial and anti-viral action. Studies have shown just after a day of supplementation, elderberry syrup significantly reduced flu symptoms."

## COMBATING OVERINDULGENCE

We're all human and we have all overindulged at times – with the result being your liver can be overloaded and unable to do its job effectively. And that's where milk thistle comes in.

"I like to make sure I have a bottle of milk thistle in hand, traditionally used to help relieve symptoms of overindulgence in food and drink," explained Jenny Logan, Product Development and Training Manager at Natures Aid.

"This is a great one to help relieve those sensations of indigestion and upset stomach, which can occur after a large meal or a few drinks (or both!)."

## SUPPORT CIRCULATION

We also have the wonderful ginkgo biloba.

Alison advised: "This herb most deservedly has a reputation for supporting circulation, particularly the flow of blood nourishing the brain. Those of us with cold hands and feet, or a fuzzier brain than we'd like, will often find this herb brings improvements. Again, it has a multitude of actions contributing to its overall effect. It helps your body make better use of oxygen and glucose, which is great for your brain and will make you feel more energetic."

"Then it eases any unhelpful constriction in your blood vessels, allowing blood to flow more efficiently around your body. And then it has amazing antioxidant properties, which is one of the reasons it's lasted so long (it's our oldest known tree species), even withstanding nuclear bombs."

## ADDRESSING INFLAMMATION

"A herbal remedy I find super-helpful all year round is devil's claw. A dramatic name, but actually it has a very simple effect, quelling excessive inflammation in the body. This is beneficial for numerous body systems and can be used for inflammation caused by all sorts of issues, from toothache to arthritis. Handily, it can be taken alongside other medication, and if you're finding it helpful, there is no limitation on how long you can take it for," Alison suggested.

Victor added: "Turmeric with black pepper has become a regular daily supplement for the relief of arthritic and rheumatic disorders and is taken also by many as a general tonic."

And Sujata suggested: "Ginger can be used either as a fresh root or as a dried powder but either way, has anti-inflammatory benefits."

Jenny Carson added: "Ginger exerts anti-inflammatory properties and has shown to relieve pain and swelling in cases of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and muscular problems. Ginger is known for acting directly on the gastrointestinal system to reduce nausea and has been shown to reduce symptoms of motion sickness associated with travel."

## TO CALM

Jenny Carson highlighted lemon balm.

"This herb is great for several reasons; lemon balm is well known for its relaxing properties and works by helping to relieve stress and anxiety. In addition, lemon balm has been shown to improve sleep. It works well on cognition and memory, as well as helping reduce feelings of agitation and supporting mental health issues," she explained.

### Try this

- ★ A. Vogel Echinaforce
- ★ Viridian Organic Lemon Balm Tincture
- ★ Terranova Astragalus, Elderberry and Garlic Complex
- ★ Virillin Advanced Immune Support
- ★ The Good Guru Organic Ashwagandha

## FOR GENERAL HEALTH

There are other herbs you could consider.

Liz Kerr, Marketing Manager at tea brand, Heath & Heather, commented: "Herbs are known for their ability to combat common ailments and digestion problems and aid those who have trouble sleeping. Chamomile is a popular choice to aid sleep and peppermint to help with digestion. Herbal infused teas are a comforting and convenient way to absorb herbs and botanicals. With most herbal teas being caffeine free, they are perfect to drink any time of the day. They are also widely allergen-free, gluten-free, suitable for vegetarians, vegans, and kosher."

You could also choose:

- **Rosemary:** Derek explained: "Known as the memory herb, in ancient Greece, it was given to students to stimulate their skills for exams but what they did not appreciate was that rosemary is a powerful antioxidant, known to aid in growth, as well as nerve tissue regeneration."
- **Agnus castus:** Jenny Logan advised: "Agnus castus is traditionally used to help relieve pre-menstrual symptoms, including bloating, mood swings, irritability, and menstrual cramps. Look for a 400mg extract and try it for at least three months."
- **Black seed:** Research shows black seed strengthens the lungs, boosts overall lung function, and improves breathing capacity. Black seed oil is rich in essential fatty acids, including omega 3s. It is also high in the critical substances, phytosterols, which research shows help boost overall immunity. It is a good source of natural vitamin E," Derek commented.
- **Ashwagandha:** "It's known for its adaptogen action and has anxiolytic effect. The compounds with anolides aids in its anti-inflammatory action. It is known for improving muscle strength and it is a brain tonic due to its concentration improvement action," Sujata advised.
- **Gotu kola:** Sujata added: "Saponins is the primary active compound in this herb. It has wound healing property and improves microcirculation. It is an anti-ageing and anti-inflammatory herb."

## SUPPLEMENT ADVICE

Although herbs can be used in cooking, to gain the most benefit, many experts suggest taking a supplement.

"Consuming the whole herb means you will get its full spectrum of plant chemicals (phytochemicals). However, these whole herbs are not standardised, which means they have not been tested to determine how many chemical components they contain. This makes it harder to confirm the quality and potency of the herb. In some cases, you may need to take a lot more of the herb to see its benefits," Jenny Carson explained.

"Herbal supplements are standardised by measuring the amount of one or two phytochemical compounds which have been well researched and have been recognised as having benefits. Standardising a herb also ensures that there is a consistency in the product throughout batch to batch."

Deepali Shah, Nutritionist at Lifeplan, added: "If you are choosing certain herbs for a specific reason, sometimes taking a supplement may be a good choice. Supplements contain herbal extracts, which are standardised to ensure their quality credentials and contain concentrated active ingredients, that are chosen for their natural properties."

Some will be called food supplements, which means they are not medicinal and so should not make claims. And then there are those with Traditional Herbal Registrations (THR), marked with a symbol on the pack.

Alison advised: "Many medicinal herbs have to be licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency; and, if so, they will have a THR logo on them and a Patient Information Leaflet inside. This means they are definitely what they say on the tin and have been assessed for safety, as well as quality."

Jenny Logan added: "A good supplement will be made to GMP standards and carry a Traditional Herbal Registration. This means that only the best quality herbal ingredients have been used, and the traditional dose is being supplied every time. These products also must be made to GMP pharmaceutical standards, and use the best quality herbal extracts, which are tested and checked."

Victor continued: "The unit dose of herbs is also controlled when taking a tablet or a capsule, where the manufacturer must adhere to Good Manufacturing Practice and ensure that dose levels are accurate and effective."

Derek suggested being aware of how herbs are sourced, commenting: "Farmed herbs and spices from manmade soils (even so-called organic ones) contain far less nutrients than those collected in the wilderness, are often exposed to synthetic chemicals, be it from pesticides or when being extracted, and also very often damaged by heat when being processed. Look for supplements that are 100 per cent raw, guaranteed to be free of GMOs and do not contain engineered substances, such as ascorbic acid, soy derivatives like lecithin, canola oil, citric acid, plus even corn, wheat, and all noxious additives and fillers like magnesium stearate."

When it is a food supplement, Jenny Carson explained: "Herbal supplements are regulated by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as dietary supplements, these regulations ensure herbal supplements meet certain quality standards. The FSA ensures all raw materials undertake extensive third-party laboratory testing for contaminants, heavy metals and microbiology prior to acceptance and use."

Organic is also important when buying herbal products.

Sujata added: "Choosing only organic and vegan foods and supplements is one way to ensure extra care and measures have been taken by growers or manufacturers to produce foods and products which are free of pesticides and other common but harmful additives. By eliminating the presence of harmful additives or substances in your diet, you can successfully reduce your risks and maximise or enhance your potential benefits."

# NATURAL LIFESTYLE'S Top Picks



## Advanced immune support

Virillin has been formulated by Dr John Briffa – a medical doctor and award-winning health writer with 30 years' experience in natural medicine. One of Virillin's key ingredients is a concentrated extract of the Indian herb

Andrographis. This has known immune-stimulating properties, and several studies show it has clear anti-viral action. Another of Virillin's essential elements is Black Elderberry extract. This plant has a long history of use in the treatment of fever, and research shows it can speed relief from viral infections.



## Hedgerow health hero!

Weleda's natural medicine, Prunus Spinosa 6X Oral Drops, has been formulated for the symptomatic relief of fatigue following stress or illness, to alleviate the washed out or depleted feeling that can follow a bout of illness or stressful times. The fresh leaf tips, which appear after flowering, are handpicked from the blackthorn hedges in Weleda's own Derbyshire herb gardens, harnessing

the vitality of the new shoots and the powerful fortifying properties of the biodynamically grown blackthorn. The drops are easy to take - just 5-7 drops in a little water, three times daily, until symptoms improve. Suitable for vegans.

[www.weleda.co.uk](http://www.weleda.co.uk)



## Thoughtful balance

Viridian Nutrition's 100% organic Lemon Balm Tincture is a high potency liquid food supplement made using fresh lemon balm with naturally occurring rosmarinic acid and picked by hand to help preserve the delicate leaf and nutrient density. The lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is grown organically in the UK and added to water and organic alcohol to produce a pure tincture which harnesses the natural beneficial properties. Viridian's therapeutic formulation has a ratio of 1ml equivalent to 480mg of fresh herb and can be helpful for people looking to find thoughtful balance and mindful rhythm. Available in 50ml.

Vegan, ethically made.

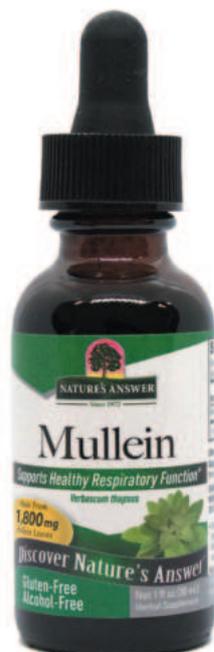
[www.viridian-nutrition.com](http://www.viridian-nutrition.com)

## Trust Nature's Answer

Mullein has been used traditionally across centuries, continents and cultures for the treatment of respiratory conditions such as hay fever, asthma bronchitis and infections. Nature's Answer Mullein Leaf Liquid Herbal Extract is an alcohol- and gluten-free super-concentrated extract with the herbal equivalent of 2,000mg of mullein leaves per serving. Nature's Answer alcohol-free extracts are produced using a cold Bio-Chelated proprietary extraction process, yielding a Holistically Balanced Authentic Botanical Fingerprint extract in the same synergistic ratios as in the plant, which allows Nature's Answer to set standards for proving the authenticity of each herb, guaranteeing authenticity, safety, and efficacy in every Nature's Answer product.

Available from all good health stores and independent pharmacies nationwide and

[www.kijaniliving.com](http://www.kijaniliving.com)



## Stay Calm & Clear

Help to bring Calm into your busy life.

Over 85% of Adults experience regular stress. Are you constantly rushing, feeling overwhelmed and can't switch off with constant mind chatter? Do you need to find a little time for yourself? Australian Bush Flowers Calm & Clear contains 8 powerful flower essences, hand collected from wild pristine environments. Each product is handcrafted to help you wind down, enhance clarity, promote calmness and relaxation, whilst regaining focus. Applied Morning & Night, by your choice of application: Remedy drops (7 x drops) or Oral Spray (2 x Sprays). Prices from £10.95. Stocked by all good Health Stores.

[www.ausflowers.co.uk](http://www.ausflowers.co.uk)



# Syno-Vital®

Joint Thinking

## Lockdown Love For Your Joints, Skin and Eyes. Award winning Syno-Vital® available for under £1-a-day.

Those of us in our 40s and beyond, have never been more aware of self-care and ageing well as we are today. And it's just as important to be kind to yourself from the inside out.

Our joints, skin and eyes become dry and tired as we get older, and that's because our body produces less Hyaluronic Acid (HA). The fluid provides essential moisture and lubrication to the body. And even with the healthiest and most balanced diet, it can be difficult to top the body up with HA.

But Syno-Vital®, developed by Modern Herbals, may help bring that essential moisture back. It's the only oral sachet solution of its kind, and by taking one sachet a day in a glass of water, you can feel active, refreshed and revitalised.

Simply add a sachet of the colourless, odourless liquid to water once a day. Syno-Vital® may help to replenish synovial fluid for improved mobility and moisturisation as well as preventing further degradation of joint tissues.

### "AMAZING..."

*"I've been taking Syno-Vital for 6 months now, I'm amazed by how young looking my skin appears, I look younger than ever!"*

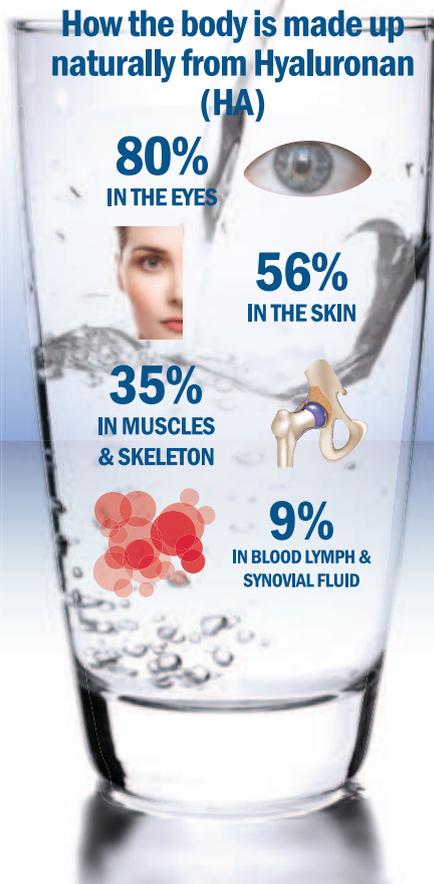
*"I've been suffering with stiff joints over the past few years, but I can now bend my elbows and knees much easier without pain. I'd recommend Syno-Vital to all my friends and family."*

Liz Parkin, Huddersfield



### The Village of Long Life

Hyaluronic Acid supplementation was discovered in a village called Yuzurihara, just two hours south of Tokyo. World Health Organisation studies revealed that ten times more people in this village were living beyond the age of 85 years than anywhere in North America\*. Not only did they live longer, but the appearance and vitality of its ageing people showed they had smoother skin, flexible joints, healthy thick hair, and very few needed reading glasses. In fact, one lady in her 90s had no wrinkles or age spots.



Call free on  
**0800 731 0725**

**Order Now**

Available From All Good Independent  
Health Food Stores

Or visit  
**modernherbals.com**

\*according to J.Japonica (2011), J.Jacks Japonica, Canada: Xlibris Corporation, 173

# Your gold stars

You voted in your droves for those natural health and wellbeing products that have made a difference to your health – and here, we can reveal the winners of the annual *Natural Lifestyle Product Awards*.

## Natural Lifestyle Product Awards 2020



### BEST SUPPLEMENT

## Syno-Vital Oral Hyaluronic Acid



Syno-Vital is the leading brand of pure liquid hyaluronic acid, which is easily absorbed by the body.

Hyaluronic acid may help to increase the viscosity of the synovial fluid and so restore the cushioning effect for the joints, thus improving flexibility. As we get older, we produce less hyaluronic acid, hence, we start to show and feel signs of ageing, such as aching joints and wrinkly skin. Hyaluronic acid makes up a massive 80 per cent of the human eye, 60 per cent of the skin and crucially, 90 per cent of the joints.

Taking Syno-Vital can help to top up those levels and ease joint problems, while hydrating the skin and eyes too.

Commenting on the win, Wendy Atkinson, founder of Modern Herbs, which has Syno-Vital in its portfolio, said: “We are delighted to have won the award for Best Supplement 2020. During a year that has seen such sadness and uncertainty, it’s a delight to find that our unique and effective brand, Syno-Vital, has won some recognition. We feel proud that we were up against such quality products in this category, from many of our industry’s most trusted manufacturers and we got to win! Thank you to all our loyal customers and *Natural Lifestyle* readers who voted for us.”

Highly commended: Bladapure

### BEST PERSONAL CARE

## Salt of the Earth Deodorant Balm

Offering long-lasting freshness and comprising 100 per cent natural ingredients, this vegan, cruelty-free and plastic-free deodorant is your new favourite natural alternative to traditional antiperspirants.

Providing effective protection from body odour without the use of synthetic chemicals, this Melon & Cucumber Natural Deodorant Balm is perfect for those wanting to reduce their use of disposable plastics.

Speaking of the win, Thomas Laird, Managing Director of Crystal Spring, which has the Salt of the Earth brand in its portfolio, commented: “We are delighted that our new deodorant balms have won the Best Personal Care Product Award. The balms were designed specifically to be plastic-free, as well as 100 per cent natural, vegan and cruelty-free, as all of our products are, so it’s great to be able to play our part in reducing plastic waste. We would like to thank all of the *Natural Lifestyle* readers who took the time to vote for us, we really appreciate it.”

Highly commended: Bio-Kult Candéa



### BEST BEAUTY/ BODY CARE

## Antipodes Baptise

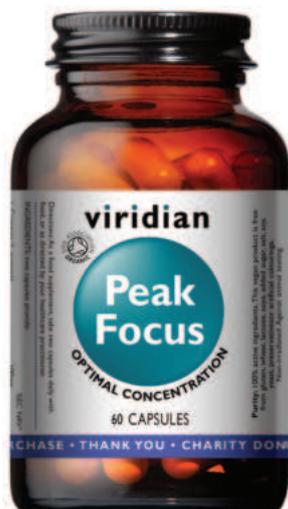


Introducing the latest innovation from Antipodes, Baptise H2O Ultra-Hydrating Water Gel. This weightless, intensive formula immerses thirsty skin in pure, natural moisture.

Deeply thirst-quenching without heaviness or oiliness, the formula is easily absorbed, yet powerfully hydrates skin, all day and night. Plant-originated hyaluronic acid works with New Zealand manuka honey and harakeke gel to deeply hydrate skin. Mamaku black fern helps regenerate and foster healthy cells and South Pacific hibiscus flower gently exfoliates deadened skin cells to freshen your complexion. This formulation is clinically shown to increase skin hydration by 52 per cent.

“The versatility and uniqueness of Antipodes Baptise has shone through – it’s the perfect moisturiser for virtually every skin type, and I know it became the go-to skin soother for many colleagues and friends last year,” enthused Alexander Barani, Managing Director at Kinetic, which distributes the Antipodes range in the UK.

Highly commended: Weleda Aknedoron



**BEST NEW**

## Viridian Peak Focus



Peak Focus is a unique herbal food supplement formulated to support optimal concentration.

Developed using clinically researched extracts, Peak Focus features organic lemon balm – Viridian’s Ingredient of the Year 2020 – to help maintain good cognitive function, and organic sage to help maintain optimal mental wellbeing, including concentration, attention and memory.

This could be when handling pressured work environments, managing new challenges, studying for qualifications, or dealing with the onset of cognitive decline.

Certified organic by the Soil Association, it acts within two hours of taking. Contains 100 per cent active ingredients and palm-oil free. Vegan, ethically made and available in 60 capsules.

Aimee Benbow, Director of Nutrition at Viridian Nutrition, commented: “We are thrilled that our Peak Focus supplement has won Best New. Peak Focus has been developed using highly researched ingredients that are grown responsibly and certified organic by the Soil Association. This completely natural brain support supplement helps maintain good cognitive function and optimal mental wellbeing, including concentration, attention and memory. We would like to say a huge ‘thank you’ to all the readers for voting for Viridian in the *Natural Lifestyle* Product Awards.”

Highly commended: Synaptaid



**BEST ECO/HOUSEHOLD**

## LoofCo Washing-Up Soaps



LoofCo Washing-Up Soaps complete your plastic-free washing-up routine as they replace plastic bottles of washing-up liquid.

These 100g solid bars are available in Lemongrass or Fragrance Free, expertly formulated to remove grease, and effectively clean crockery, cutlery, glasses and pans. Simply lather with warm water onto a LoofCo Washing-Up Pad, Scraper or Brush, then wash item and rinse. Also perfect for handwashing laundry while remaining gentle on skin.

Containing organic coconut oil and glycerine, they fit the LoofCo ethos to provide plastic-free, vegan washing-up. Paraben-free, SLS-free, vegan, biodegradable and great value at £2.75 per bar.

Lois Clark, Co-founder and Director of NatBrands, which has the LoofCo range in its portfolio, commented: “Thank you for buying, using and voting for LoofCo! We are delighted to have won Best Eco Household Product for 2020. We created our LoofCo range of pads, brushes and accessories made with biodegradable coconut and loofah fibres for washing-up, household cleaning and bath-time as a simple lifestyle switch to help reduce plastic pollution. In 2020, we completed our plastic-free washing-up routine with LoofCo Washing-Up Soap Bars – *Natural Lifestyle* readers love this effective vegan, paraben and SLS-free option. Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm. We will be adding some exciting new products to the LoofCo range in 2021.”

Highly commended: Natracare Plastic-free Curved Panty Liners

**BEST FOOD & DRINK**

## Terranova Life Drink

Terranova Life Drink is a nutritious and nourishing blend of superfoods, omega 3 oils, probiotics, digestive enzymes, minerals and vitamins.

This once-a-day formula provides you with important vitamins and minerals to support good overall health and can be conveniently added to smoothies and juices. Each 12g scoop contains a balanced vegetable protein blend, a superfood blend of spirulina and chlorella, a selection of power greens, including kale and wheatgrass, a selection of power berries, such as acai and aronia, an omega 3, 6, 9 blend of flaxseed, borage and olive oils, freeze dried shiitake and reishi mushrooms and a digestive blend of probiotics, prebiotics and digestive enzymes.

The ingredients are 100 per cent active and free from gluten and dairy, as well as any sugars, colourings or flavourings, and suitable for vegetarians and vegans.

Stephen Terrass, CEO and Founder of Terranova Nutrition, commented: “All of us at Terranova are so grateful to the readers of *Natural Lifestyle* magazine for choosing Life Drink in this year’s awards, especially considering the fantastic products we were up against, this award was such a beautiful surprise! And we’re deeply thankful to the UK’s independent natural product retailers and their wonderful customers for the support they give to Terranova every day!”

Highly commended: Free From Fellows Wine Gums



**BEST HERBAL**

## A.Vogel Echinaforce

What makes A.Vogel Echinaforce Cold and Flu oral drops so special? Well, it was created by world renowned naturopath, Alfred Vogel, whose years of experience and knowledge led him to create a unique formula made from extracts of freshly harvested, organic *Echinacea purpurea* herb and root.

Echinaforce is a traditional herbal medicinal product used to relieve common cold and ‘flu-like symptoms, exclusively based on long-standing use. It is available in tincture and tablet format from health food stores nationwide. Always read the leaflet.

CEO, Steve Brockie, enthused: “It’s very exciting to hear this news. All of us at A. Vogel are very proud to receive this acknowledgement and we recognise that Echinaforce really is a special product. We never use dried herbs in our Echinaforce products, and we remain committed to the organic farming of our own plants and ensuring the fresh plant material is processed immediately following harvest.”

Highly commended: Viridian Organic Lemon Balm Tincture

# Heart power

## A closer look at the essential nutrients we need for a healthy heart.

**W**hen it comes to heart health, it is important to focus on healthy blood flow and the prevention of blocked arteries or atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a disease in which plaque

builds up inside your arteries and can affect the blood supply to your heart. This is one of the leading causes of heart attacks, strokes and peripheral vascular disease.

There are some key measures we can take to support our long-term heart health. Quit smoking, maintain a healthy weight, exercise and avoid ultra-processed foods. Include

more plant foods at every meal and snack, alongside lots of healthy fats, nuts and seeds and legumes as well. Omega 3 fatty acids, in particular, are very heart friendly as their anti-inflammatory properties can help protect the blood vessels from inflammation and damage, as well as reducing overall triglycerides in the blood.



### Enzymes for the heart

Systemic enzymes such as serrapeptase and nattokinase are becoming widely recognised for the natural role they can play in supporting cardiovascular health. Both can help target inflammation, as well as clean unhealthy debris from the blood vessels, supporting better heart and circulatory health. Their anti-inflammatory benefits are beneficial when we understand the role inflammation plays as a driver for atherosclerosis. Inflammation can damage the blood vessels, promoting the growth of plaques and even contribute to a greater risk of blood clots.

### What else?

Magnesium works closely with vitamins K2 and D3 to support proper calcium metabolism, and this is vital for heart health to prevent the deposits of calcium in the blood vessels.

K2 has been shown to lower the risk of blood vessel damage by activating MGP, which inhibits calcium from depositing on the vessel walls. Likewise, low MGP can lead to the potential calcification of blood vessels, which can contribute to atherosclerosis.

### Metabolic wellness

Citrus bergamia, otherwise known as bergamot, is an anti-inflammatory with an abundance of benefits.

It has been used therapeutically in the Mediterranean since the 1800s and when taken as an extract, bergamot offers multiple heart health benefits. Studies show when taken as an encapsulated powder for six months, it can help increase 'good' HDL cholesterol and greatly lower high levels of 'bad' LDL cholesterol. Unlike medication, bergamot extract doesn't block cholesterol production, but naturally helps to balance cholesterol levels and protect it from oxidation.

Bergamot flavonoids are also considered exceptional metabolic regulators, with the potential to fight metabolic syndrome. As well as positively impacting blood lipid levels, these compounds may also be beneficial for blood pressure.

### Reader offer

Good Health Naturally's Essential Heart Health Support Pack includes Blockbuster AllClear, Serrano, D3/K2 Spray and HeartPower45 (bergamot extract). These products feature the powerful enzymes of serrapeptase and nattokinase, alongside other supporting nutrients to provide comprehensive support to your cardiovascular system. All products are produced to the highest quality, and you won't find any unnecessary binders, additives or fillers. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of the Essential Heart Health Support Packs. See opposite page to enter.



# NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

**Natural Lifestyle is about giving back to our readers, and each month, this page will showcase a selection of giveaways.**

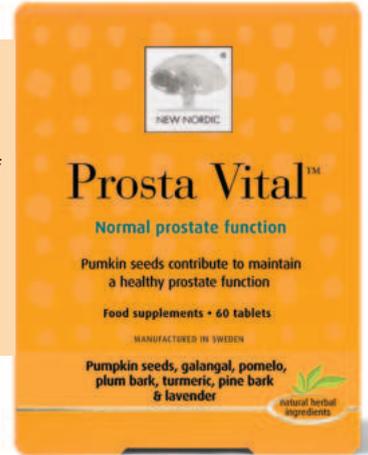


## ORGANII SPF20 SUN MILK AND SPF15 ANTI-AGEING FACIAL SUN CREAM

Stay protected year-round with this mineral sun bundle from ORGANII. Naturally protecting you from UVA and UVB rays, this duo is certified organic, vegan and cruelty-free. With organic plant extracts of argan, jojoba, sunflower, olive fruit, karanja, flaxseed, chamomile and vitamin E, your skin will be nourished, moisturised and hydrated while non-nano zinc oxide and titanium dioxide shield from UV rays. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of 10 sets, worth £32.90 each.

## NEW NORDIC PROSTA VITAL

As men age, the prostate tends to grow, and that can mean more frequent urination and incontinence. Prosta Vital is based on natural pumpkin seed extract and a unique herbal combination of plum and pine bark, pomelo, turmeric, galangal root, long pepper and black pepper, lavender and vitamin E. Both plum bark extract and pumpkin seed extract help reduce an enlarged prostate and galangal root and vitamin D help maintain good cell health and fight inflammation in the prostate and urinary tract. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three.



## GOOD GURU ORGANIC TURMERIC, GINGER & BLACK PEPPER

*Natural Lifestyle* has teamed up with The Good Guru to offer readers the chance of winning one of five of its Organic Turmeric (Curcumin) Ginger & Black Pepper. Made with 100 per cent organic and pure ingredients, it contains 1050mg of turmeric curcumin, 20mg black pepper and 130mg of ginger per serving of two capsules. No additives or fillers, the combination of ingredients helps to reduce inflammation.

## PROVEN EVERYDAY IMMUNE SUPPORT

*Natural Lifestyle* has teamed up with digestive health experts, ProVen, to offer readers the chance of winning one of six of its Everyday Immune Support for daily immune support. It contains five billion Lab4 probiotics, researched-backed friendly bacteria and prebiotics (FOS) with vitamins C and D, zinc, selenium, elderberry extract and beta 1,3 and 1,6 glucans. One-a-day powder sachets, you mix with water to make a delicious orange flavoured effervescent drink or take directly into the mouth. Flavoured naturally using freeze-dried orange.



## BASS BRUSHES BIO FLEX BRUSH

The Bio Flex Detangler range from BASS brushes is effective, durable, and certified 95 per cent biodegradable with a patented handle made from plant starch. The shape is anatomically contouring for the head to provide maximum comfort and the pins are soft and flexible to reduce hair pulling when detangling. Available in a range of fun colours, the sustainable hairbrush is eco-friendly, vegan and perfect to prepare the hair for styling, or just a quick touch-up – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three Pink Hairbrushes, worth £9.99 each.

**ENTER HERE** Please indicate below which giveaway you are applying for, complete form and post back to us at 'Reader Offers', *Natural Lifestyle* magazine, The Old Dairy, Hudsons Farm, Fieldgate Lane, Ugley Green, Bishops Stortford CM22 6HJ. Closing Date: February 1, 2021. Or you can enter online – visit [www.mynaturallifestyle.com](http://www.mynaturallifestyle.com)

Please tick:  Organii  New Nordic  Good Guru  ProVen  Bass Brushes  Good Health Naturally

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- I would like to be contacted by *Natural Lifestyle* magazine, including a free monthly e-newsletter. You can unsubscribe at any time.  
 I would like to be contacted by *Natural Lifestyle* and relevant third parties

# Gluten free goodness

Free-from foods don't need to mean you miss out, especially not with these recipes from the delectable new book, *How to Make Anything Gluten Free*.



## Breakfast bars

Makes 9

**What can I say? These bars are stupidly easy and quick to make, packed with tons of goodness and they taste divine. Every bite is bursting with banana flavour, a hint of peanut butter and a welcome sweetness from the cranberries. The nuts and seeds add a lovely crunch too. This is my go-to on-the-go gluten-free breakfast!**

**Time:** Take 20 minutes

### Ingredients:

- Butter or oil, for greasing
- 4 ripe bananas (around 460g/15oz peeled weight)
- 120g/generous ½ cup peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
- 250g/2½ cups gluten-free oats
- 60g/½ cup dried cranberries
- 60g/½ cup pecans, chopped
- 30g/¼ cup pumpkin seeds

### Method:

- Preheat the oven to 160°C fan/180°C/350°F. Lightly grease a 20cm/8in square baking tin (pan) and line with non-stick baking parchment.

- Mash your bananas in a large mixing bowl until nice and smooth, then mix in your peanut butter. Stir in your oats until well combined. Mix in your dried cranberries, pecans and pumpkin seeds, reserving a few of the pumpkin seeds to scatter on top.
- Spread the mixture into your tin and evenly compact it in. Try to get it nice and level on top before scattering on your extra pumpkin seeds. Lightly compact those in too, using the back of a fork.
- Bake in the oven for around 15 minutes, then remove and allow to cool before cutting into bars.

**Tip:** You can also substitute the peanut butter with chocolate hazelnut spread if you're not a huge PB fan.



Becky Excell

# Six-ingredient soda bread

Makes one loaf (about 12 slices)

Who knew that you could turn six humble ingredients into freshly baked gluten-free soda bread? There's no yeast required for this recipe, so it's pretty quick as far as bread making goes. It has a soft crust and a lovely, light texture in the middle. If you're new to baking gluten-free bread, this is a great place to start.

Time: Takes about 1.5 hours

## Ingredients:

- 345ml/1½ cups, minus 1tbsp milk
- 5tbsp lemon juice
- 300g/2¼ cups gluten-free plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1tsp xanthan gum
- 1tsp bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- ½ tsp salt (optional)
- 30g/2tbsp cold butter, cubed

## Method:

- Add your milk and lemon juice to a jug (pitcher) and briefly mix. Allow to stand for 10-15 minutes until the mixture becomes thicker and a little lumpy.
- In a large mixing bowl, add your flour, xanthan gum, bicarb, and salt, if using, and mix until well combined. Add your butter and rub it in with your fingers until it forms a breadcrumb-like consistency.
- Pour in your thickened milk mixture and stir well with a wooden spoon, until smooth and it resembles a thick cake batter.
- If using a proving basket, add one tablespoon of flour to it. Rotate the basket so that the flour lightly coats all of the base and sides. If you don't have a proving basket, prepare a small mixing bowl by greasing the insides with butter. Then add one tablespoon of flour to it and rotate the bowl so that the flour lightly coats all of the base and halfway up the sides too.
- Pour your mixture into the prepared proving basket or bowl and smooth over the top so it's nice and flat. Cover and allow to rest for no less than 30 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 240°C fan/260°C/500°F (or as hot as your oven will go if it doesn't reach these temperatures) and place a 28cm/11in skillet or round baking tin (pan) in the oven. Place a large roasting dish at the bottom of the oven and boil a kettle.
- Once your dough has rested, carefully invert it out onto a large sheet of non-stick baking parchment in one quick motion.
- Remove the skillet or baking tin from the oven. Use the baking parchment to gently transfer the dough into the hot skillet or tin. Score a cross in the top of your dough using a sharp knife. Place in the preheated oven and immediately add a mug's worth of boiling water to the roasting dish.
- Bake for 10 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F and bake for another 30 minutes, until golden.
- Remove from the oven and carefully remove the loaf from the skillet or baking tin; tap the base to check that it feels and sounds hollow – if so, then it's done. Dust off any excess flour from the top, place onto a wire rack and allow to cool completely before slicing.



# One-bowl blueberry muffins

Makes 15

**These light and fluffy muffins are packed with bursting blueberries, finished with a shimmering, crunchy, sugared top. This recipe is incredibly versatile so if you want to replace the blueberries with chocolate chips, then go for it! Just skip adding the lemon if so.**

**Time:** Takes 30 minutes

**Ingredients:**

- 180ml/¾ cup milk
- 1tbsp lemon juice
- 130ml/½ cup, plus 1tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large egg
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- 200g/1 cup caster (superfine) sugar
- 1tsp bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- ¼ tsp xanthan gum
- 300g/2¼ cups gluten-free self-raising (self-rising) flour, plus 1tsp for the blueberries
- 200g/½ cups fresh blueberries
- 4tbsp demerara sugar

**Method:**

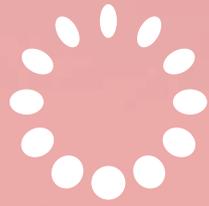
- Preheat your oven to 160°C fan/180°C/350°F.
- Line a 12-hole muffin tray with muffin or tulip cases.
- In a jug (pitcher), mix your milk and lemon

juice and allow to stand for 10 minutes until it curdles a little.

- In a large mixing bowl, add your oil, milk mixture, egg and lemon zest. Mix until combined and smooth, using a hand whisk. Next, add in your caster sugar, bicarb, xanthan gum and flour. Whisk by hand until just combined, then immediately stop mixing. Be gentle and don't over-whisk!
- Mix the berries with the teaspoon of flour to stop them from sinking in the batter. Then carefully fold your blueberries into the batter. Spoon your mixture into the muffin cases, dividing it evenly. Sprinkle one teaspoon of demerara sugar on top of each muffin, then bake in the oven for 22-25 minutes until golden. Check they're cooked by sticking a skewer into the centre of a muffin – if it comes out clean, then they're done. Bear in mind that you might hit a gooey blueberry!
- Allow to cool in the muffin tray, then carefully transfer your muffins to a wire rack to cool.



Extracted from *How to Make Anything Gluten Free* by Becky Excell (Quadrille, £20). Photography ©Hannah Hughes.



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