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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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TRIP ON THE EXOTICISM OF COUTURE

BODY MATTERS



WHAT YOU SHOULD READ

STRESS TIPS

Is the mere thought of Christmas obligations and strained family get-togethers enough to bring you out in a cold sweat? Then make Charles Linden's *Stress Free in 30 Days* your bedtime reading until the new year. Each easy-to-digest chapter focuses on a different stress-relieving technique, so the act of reading the book doesn't itself become a burden. The best bit of advice? Avoid "power sappers" — vampire-like friends or relatives who feed on your energy in an attempt to bolster their own. The key is to make sure you remain emotionally detached from whatever they say or do. Just seeing it set down in black and white helps you feel calmer.

Stress Free in 30 Days by Charles Linden
£14.95 (£17.99) www.amazon.co.uk

WHAT YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO

RUNNING SOUNDTRACK

We all know that running to our favourite beats is one of the best motivators. And now, there's a soundtrack designed to let you do just that. Originally commissioned by Nike, LCD SoundSystem's *4533* is an uninterrupted piece of music designed to see you through every phase of your run. There's an upbeat disco section to get you in the mood, a pumping mix for when you're sprinting flat out and an ambient finale for those cool-down stretches. Perfect for those who are bored with their own playlist.

DFA/EM, £6.99



WHAT YOU SHOULD TRY

NATURAL MUSCLE RUB

Zip's Muscle Rub is a secret weapon for muscles that have been reduced to tight, lumpy boulders from a hearty workout or too many hours hunched over a computer. The shea-butter blend rich in soothing arnica, and a far gentler than Deep Heat, but as effective.

£6. 0800 389 8195

Helen Brown



WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

JENNIFER HARPER-DEACON

I MY JOB ENTAILS A LOT OF SOCIAL ENTERTAINING INVOLVING ALCOHOL. ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, CAN YOU ADVISE HOW I CAN HELP MY BODY TO RECOVER?

ANON

A The liver is primarily responsible for the detoxification of substances such as alcohol, so you should focus on keeping it in prime working order. Good diet and hydration (drinking sufficient amounts of water between meals and between alcoholic beverages — one glass after each drink) are simple ways to support this essential organ. Favour, too, organic, alkaline-rich fruit and vegetables (for example, papaya, pears, grapes, celery, parsley and asparagus) and essential fatty acids (found in oily fish, and flax- and hemp-seed oil) to support efficient detoxification. Make sure you include some liver superfoods in your weekly shop, such as artichoke, which helps to purify the liver; avocado, a rich source of glutathione, which the liver and kidneys need to process drugs, chemicals and environmental toxins; potassium-rich beetroot, which stimulates and strengthens the bowel, aiding the elimination of toxins; and turmeric, an antioxidant spice traditionally used in Asian medicine for liver problems (add 1 tsp when cooking rice).

You may not be aware that alcoholic drinks often contain additives and preservatives that won't help your situation. BioCare's HepaGuard Forte supports the liver's ability to eliminate these toxic substances (£14.65 for 60 capsules; 0121 433 3727). It contains protective antioxidants in the form of green tea, apple extract and alpha lipoic acid, nutrients such as methionine and taurine, and artichoke to promote the excretion of toxins. Take two capsules at bedtime.

On rising, drink a cup of hot water, with the juice of half a lemon and its grated zest added, to help your liver recover. When showering, follow the old naturopathic routine of alternating hot and cold water, finishing with a blast of cold to stimulate and detoxify.

If you have had a heavy night and intend to drive the next morning, I suggest that you invest in AlcoSense (£60; www.alcosense.co.uk), a mobile phone-sized breath-tester that can accurately measure if you are near or over the UK drink-driving limit.

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If you have any questions, write to: What's the Alternative? Style, The Sunday Times, 1 Perrinington Street, London E9H 1SE. We can only provide replies to published letters. Before following any recommendation, consult your GP.