

CALM BULLETIN

>>> Financially fearless
Don't let money worries dampen your libido. If you're feeling the pressure of the current economic climate, *The Age of Anxiety: A Guided Meditation for the Financially Stressed* by Mark Forstater (available on CD, £12.99, or to download, £7.99, at www.theageofanxiety.com), claims to provide a 'mini-vacation for your mind' to ease feelings of despair and panic and help you deal with your money problems.

>>> Free your feet
See in the new year in style as well as comfort with Rieker's award-winning AntiStress footwear, from £40. With designs suitable for day and evening, the flexible, shock-absorbing sole technology works by spreading the weight and pressure of the foot evenly across the sole of the shoe, so every step feels like heaven; www.rieker.com.

>>> After the big day
Hoping for a romantic Valentine's day proposal? Remember that while marriage might do wonders for your heart, it could play havoc with your health. A new study of over 3,000 women has revealed that 22 per cent of brides put on weight within a year of walking down the aisle, with the average weight gain being a stone and a half. While 42 per cent blamed their expanding waistlines on simply feeling too relaxed with their new husband, a further 22 per cent said they no longer felt the need to impress their partner after tying the knot.

>>> Local produce
Try the new relaxing lavender bathing products from Mitchell & Peach. Using lavender grown on family-run Foxbury Farm, Kent – and other locally sourced produce including English honey – the bath oil (£39 for 100ml), body cream (£36), shower wash (£20) and soaps (£28 for four) are handmade by local artisans. See www.mitchellandpeach.com.



Giddy heights

Wearing a pair of skyscraper heels might do wonders for your confidence on a date, but precariously tottering around in six-inch stilettos could lead to sore soles and see you take a humiliating tumble – not so sexy! Take a tip from Camilla Morton, author of *How to Walk in High Heels* (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99), and opt for safer shoes with sturdy, shorter stiletto heels, plus straps to hold ankles and feet in place (leave mules and sling-backs to the experts). For improved grip, avoid tights and go barefoot so your foot has better contact with the shoe. After a night on the tiles, soothe tired tootsies with Arnicare Arnica cooling gel, £4.65 for 30g (www.arnicare.co.uk), with refreshing grapefruit oil and cooling menthol.

Celebrity tip

Doing things for yourself is important when you're a busy mother. So whether I have a massage or reflexology or a long, hot bath, it's about taking time to look after myself. That, for me, is the secret to staying happy.

Supermodel Claudia Schiffer, 39

You time

Bring calm to your life this February with our inspirational wellbeing round-up

HOME SWEET HOME

Transform your home into a tranquil, soothing, spa-like environment with the new home fragrances range from Champneys (www.champneys.com). Choose between the relaxing aroma of Pampered, with warming cinnamon, aromatic cedarwood and dark clove buds, or the uplifting Revived scent, infused with crushed green leaves, ripe blackberries and aromatic herbs. Both are available in a room fragrance, £6.50, single candle, £8, and four votive candles, £10.



Treatment of the month

Salt cave therapy

Salt caves have been used therapeutically for around 200 years, providing a drug-free remedy for respiratory conditions such as asthma, hay fever, bronchitis, sinusitis, and skin conditions such as eczema. It's claimed the atmosphere helps clear out toxins from the body.

As someone who's constantly bunged up from dust and hay fever allergies, I was eager to try the treatment at London's first artificial salt cave in Wandsworth – more accessible than the natural ones in Eastern Europe. It's relaxing – you could easily nod off to the calming music – and a blanket keeps you warm as you sit and breathe in the circulating negative-ionized salt particles which, it's claimed, penetrate deeply into the respiratory system to reduce

inflammation and unblock airways. I didn't think I'd feel the benefits from one session (a course of five or more is recommended), but I could breathe much easier afterwards, with both nostrils feeling clear and mucous-free.

This treatment is suitable for anyone, from babies with asthma to athletes who want to improve their oxygen intake capacity. The levels of salt in the air can be tailored to suit you, which should mean you get quicker results than you would in a natural salt cave. An hour-long session at the Allergy and Asthma Drug Free Treatment Centre costs £35; www.saltcave.co.uk.

H&F readers can get a 30 per cent discount off packages by calling 020 8870 6006 and quoting *Health & Fitness*.



Get some ZZZZZZZZ

Dark circles aren't the only side effects of a bad night's sleep. Results from a survey by The Sleep Council found 29 per cent of people admitted to pulling a sickie from work because they felt too tired, while 39 per cent said they didn't socialise regularly for the same reason. Relationships suffer from a lack of good-quality sleep, with 58 per cent of people confessing to turning down sex and 64 per cent acknowledging they'd snapped at their partners unnecessarily when they were tired. If you need help to nod off, try Nelson's Rescue Night dropper, £5.25 for 10ml, an alcohol-free, non-addictive remedy with natural flower essences to quieten your mind when it won't switch off at night; www.nelsonshomeopathy.com.

BREATHE DEEP

Fed up with musty yoga mats that reek of stale sweat? Us too! H&F rejoiced when we heard about Yoga Abode's new, all natural Yogifeet sprays, designed to infuse your mat with a fresh, sweet-smelling scent while also acting as a mild cleaning agent. Handmade with essential oils in the UK, there are two scents to try: Equanimity is bursting with lavender, sage and jasmine to soothe and promote relaxation, while Inspiration has zesty, reviving lime, grapefruit and mandarin to increase energy. Both sprays are available in two sizes of 120g (£12.95), and a handy travel size of 30g (£5.95). H&F readers can get a 15 per cent discount on the sprays in both sizes and scents, until February 3, 2010. To claim your discount, visit www.yoga-abode.com, and enter YAHF01 at the checkout.



Make sure love's in the air with Aroma Therapeutic's Mood Enhancer range, featuring the Aroma candle, £55. Then try the massage oil, £25.95 for 50ml, and spray concentrate, all of which are designed to inspire and entice; see www.fragrantearth.com.

Yoga move of the month

Hero pose (virasana)

This helps stretch the thighs, knees and ankles and improve digestion.

- Kneel down with your thighs at a right angle to the floor (on a folded blanket to pad your knees, shins, and feet if necessary), and touching the inside of knees together. Slide your feet apart, slightly wider than your hips, with the tops of your feet flat on the floor.
- Exhale and sit back halfway, with your torso leaning slightly forward, then sit down between your feet.
- If your bottom doesn't comfortably rest on the floor, raise it by sitting on a block or

thick book placed between the feet. Make sure both sitting bones are evenly supported.

- Turn your thighs inward and press the heads of the thigh bones into the floor with the base of your palms. Then lay your hands in your lap, palms up.
- Lift the top of your sternum like a proud warrior, widen your collarbones and release your shoulderblades away from your ears. Lengthen your tailbone into the floor to anchor your back torso.
- Beginners can stay in this pose from 30 seconds to one minute, gradually extending for up to five minutes.



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